00083609

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 08 January, 2019

THE DIARY

OF

AN IDLE WOMAN IN SICILY.

VOL. II.

THE DIARY

OF

AN IDLE WOMAN IN SICILY.

A1330

BY

FRANCES ELLIOT,

AUTHOR OF

"PICTURES OF OLD ROME," "OLD COURT-LIFE IN FRANCE," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOLUME II.

83669

W C 89

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1881.

(*All rights reserved.*)

914.58
E11/Dia
83609

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Catania to Syracuse.—General X——.—The Doctor.—Plain of Catania.—Lentini.—The Unlucky Sicilian Sculpture 1

CHAPTER II.

The dreaded Trasborgo.—Megara, Hybla.—Epicharmus.—Glorious Night.—Arrival at Syracuse.—The Doctor and his Valise.—The Hotel.—Tableau! 11

CHAPTER III.

"Cicero upon Verres."—Ancient Syracuse.—Ortygia the Outer City.—What to Know.—Bad Inns.—Good Wines..... 21

CHAPTER IV.

Spanish Defences.—A Poverty-stricken City.—Loved by the Goddesses.—The Long, Broad Street.—What Hosts have Passed? 29

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

The Village Green.—National Monuments.—Disappointment.—Party to Epipolæ.—The "Smart Young Man."—"Brook of the Washerwomen."—Timoleon's Villa.—Pagan Landscape 38

CHAPTER VI.

Epipolæ.—Castle of Euryalus.—The Doctor's Notions.—Peasants.—Who Built the Castle?—The Athenians and their Defences.—Gylippus to the Rescue.—Revenons à nos Moutons.—The Walls of Dionysius.—Remains of Ancient Walls on Epipolæ 51

CHAPTER VII.

The Two Plains.—The Doctor on his "Hobby-horse."—The Hexapylum and Torre di Galeaga.—Archimedes the Necromancer.—Marcellus taking Notes.—The Romans in Syracuse.—Tears of the Victor.—The Suppliant City 66

CHAPTER VIII.

A Day in Syracuse.—Santa Lucia taking the Air.—Grecian Theatre.—Two Queens.—Hiero-Ætneas.—Æschylus and Pindar.—"Earth and Sea, A Comedy."—Phormis.—The Golden Youth.—Dionysius at the Play.—Anecdotes.—The "Younger" after Dinner.—An Ancient Farce.—Timoleon and the Statues.—The Theatre and Every-day Life..... 78

CHAPTER IX.

The Street of Tombs.—Archimedes' Grave.—Cicero's Relation.—A Misnomer 96

CHAPTER X.

PAGE

A Delicate Attention.—An Enchanted Region.—A Greek Quarry.—"Dionysius' Ear."—The Ara.—The Roman Amphitheatre.—Greek and Roman Architecture 102

CHAPTER XI.

Achradina.—The Crypt of San Marziano.—The Catacombs.—The Saracenic Siege.—End of Day in Syracuse 116

CHAPTER XII.

History of Ortygia—Gelon of Gela.—Dionysius fortifies Ortygia.—Born to be Born.—Uncle Dion turned Enemy.—The Fruit of Plato's Teaching.—The Deliverers.—Timoleon in Syracuse.—The Battle of Crimissus.—Hiero II.—The Last Tyrant of Syracuse..... 123

CHAPTER XIII.

Lovely Sea Walk.—Pier and Custom House.—Arethusa's Fountain.—A "Miasmic Ditch."—Proserpine's Veil.—The Nymph Cyane—The Olympeium.—The Necropolis at Polichne.—Gelon's Tomb..... 138

CHAPTER XIV.

Visions—The Great Harbour.—The Athenian Fleet.—"Try them by Sea."—Syracuse Conquers.—The Column at Noto.—At the Ford.—The Latomia del Paradiso.—"Just as the Greeks saw it"..... 152

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

Carthaginians in the Great Harbour.—Himilcon.—Where is Dionysius?—The Pestilence.—The Attack.—The Harbour on Fire.—Himilcon Disappears 168

CHAPTER XVI.

Castle of Maniace.—Temple of Juno.—Bronze Rams.—An Unlucky General.—The Normans Revenge Themselves.—General George turns Traitor 177

CHAPTER XVII.

Minerva's Temple.—The Doctor's Lamentations.—Diana's Temple.—A Tempest Shut Up.—How the Sea Roars!—Hotel Miseries.—The Doctor's Anxiety.—An Historical Subject 183

CHAPTER XVIII.

I Compose the History of Agathocles.—Arrival in Syracuse.—How He Rises to Power.—A "Double" of Dionysius.—The Carthaginians Again.—A Happy Inspiration.—Ho! for Africa.—The Burning of the Ships.—A Perfect Eden.—Will Carthage be His?—Hamilcar's Head.—Returns to Syracuse.—Africa Once More.—Both Sons must be Abandoned.—The Result of a Message to Menon.—Conclusion..... 195

DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN SICILY.

CHAPTER I.

Catania to Syracuse.—General X——.—The Doctor.—Plain of Catania.—Lentini.—The Unlucky Sicilian Sculpture.

NOW I have come to dread that word "trasborgo" (break-down), applied to Sicilian railroads! They are so badly engineered all through the island, that they are always breaking. When you start on a journey, it is as necessary to ask if there is "trasborgo?" as to inquire the price of your ticket.

I had heard of "trasborgo" on the rail from Catania to Palermo. Now General Marchese X——, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Captain Cavallotti, has just been here to inform

me that there is also "trasborgo" between Catania and Syracuse!

That best and most sympathetic of generals did all he could to dissuade me from going; and Captain Cavallotti, in resplendent uniform, supported him.

"Was there any fear of brigands?" I asked.

A loud laugh from the General, and a suppressed one from the Captain, as of an inferior officer obliterating himself, even in mirth, before his chief.

"Ah, madame! you are like all the forestieri! You conjure up a brigand behind every rock. Believe me, the east coast, from Messina to Syracuse, is much quieter and safer than—well, say—than the neighbourhood of Rome, for instance." (Piedmontese have, and will long retain, a certain spite against Rome, as robbing their beloved Turin of the privileges of a capital.) "About here the people are pretty much like sheep; you may drive them where you like. That is not the question. But you may have to walk miles through the mud, in open fields; you may be drenched by the rain—Sicilian rain! Your baggage may be left behind, for want of some one to carry it, and then——"

(A vague motion here of the General's

fingers, indicative of total disappearance into infinite space.)

"This time it will be boats," added the Marquis. "A bridge near Lentini is broken—a river is out. Will milady like a boat? Two boats perhaps? For I believe there is a double trasborgo; and the country so inundated that the line may break anywhere—at any time. It is really hazardous."

Now, although I am the most arrant coward breathing, I was not in a mood to be stopped by anything short of an earthquake. I had also learned not to believe one half of what was told me, even in official quarters. I was dying to see Syracuse. My vision by day, my dream by night; and I had fallen upon two friends in precisely the same condition as myself.

I will call one Physic—he was a Scotch doctor of high position; the other S——, in delicate health, and going to try the climate of Syracuse—only S—— joined us later.

The doctor had travelled all over the known world—Chinese Tartary and Cambodia were as nothing to him. He had walked over such parts of the Himalayas as are walkable, and had lived with Hindoos, Persians and Arabians —emerging into civilized life as the politest of gentlemen and the pleasantest of companions

that chance ever threw in the path of an Idle Woman.

One fine afternoon Physic and I booked ourselves for Syracuse—*secretly*. If the fact of my departure from Catania had oozed out, I should have had the General-Marquis, and his état-major in white gloves, and the Prefect and Sub-prefect, waiting on the platform to take leave of me.

From the moment you pass the last house in Catania you emerge into another world—flat, dull, swampy, treeless; altogether so different from the other side, that but for Etna dominating, grey and majestic, over pale, receding heights, you might fancy yourself in another planet.

These are the Catanian Plains, the Campi Leontini, or Campi Læstrygonie—as you like—once the granary of the world. It was the fertility of these plains, and the security of her harbour, which made "daughter Catania" so much greater than "mother Naxos," sunk in her quiet little bay, under Taormina.

Here Ceres, the Greek Demeter, sowed the first wheat with her own goddess hands, and taught men how to cultivate the soil; and here she sought her lost daughter, Proserpine, to the sound of drums and trumpets.

Here, too, lived the Læstrygonian giants, own cousins to the Cyclops.

In our day, the Pianura di Catania is a dreary swamp, bordering the coast, traversed by the river Simeto (Symœthus) which, in its time, has seen strange sights, running beside those mysterious towns without a name, at the back of Etna.

Cicero celebrates this plain as unsurpassed for fruitfulness. The soil, a stiff, alluvial clay, mixed with the driftings of volcanic rocks, is as fertile as ever; but what modern Ceres will teach the thriftless Sicilian to till it? Where are the golden wheat-ears of Proserpine? The ruddy glow of classic harvests? What river-god will order Simeto back into his bed? What national chief, like Ducetius, breathe energy and ardour into his countrymen?

"A trasborgo here would be awkward," I remark to Physic, who is sitting serene and silent in his compartimento, with his head buried in a newspaper.

(I cannot make Physic out. At Catania he spoke with enthusiasm of his desire to see Syracuse. "I am too old a traveller," said he, "not to notice everything. I love to see not only a place, but its surroundings. Syracuse is an historical record of all time; as such, the

very way to it is sacred. Every step from Catania is classic ground."

Now, I declare he has fallen into such a fit of distraction, that ever since we have been in the train he has never once raised his head.)

"If you are afraid, don't look out," he answers curtly, lifting his eyes for a moment. "When an accident is likely to happen, I take a book and read."

This is not re-assuring, nor is the alarmed silence of a French dignitary, in a purple soutane and red stockings, who sits next to him. The dignitary and his priestly secretary are hanging on to each other with that sympathy which common danger breeds.

Still on the Catanian Plains!

The soil is oozing out water as our heavy train puffs slowly over it. A broad belt of black mud runs, widespread, to the sea. Streams form themselves into rivers among the swamps, and splash and gurgle maliciously as we pass.

Like the water from the soil, my courage also is oozing out. I recall with a sigh the General's warnings. In absolute terror I watch, minute by minute, our slow advance.

Further and further recedes the white-capped dome of Etna; further and further the

cold blue hills vanish into space; and the valleys purple off vaguely into soft hazy clouds.

Among those hills lies Mineo (the Siculian chief place Menœ) near Caltagirone and Palagonia, looking down upon the mystic lake of the Palici, where sulphureous mists veiled the presence of the demons. The Menœ of Ducetius was one of the towns taken by the Saracens, when, they penetrated into these Catanian plains as far as Palagonia.

We passed one miserable little station, then another; wooden arks upon the surface of the waters, with just room for the guards to turn round, as on a pivot.

Then into a region of stone-bound breezy downs, broken by rare clumps of scanty olive trees. The aspect as of old battlefields, flattened by the iron heel of the great hosts which in all ages have trodden here, hurrying to Syracuse; a land blasted and woe-stricken, grown silent with despair!

Nothing living breaks the long lines of these grass-grown rocks. I see a solitary house (a kind of shanty) in the bosom of grey cliffs, an orange-tree or two, clustering together, a bunch of cactus, or an aloe. That is all; then, on again, into the vague greenness of the hills!

Thus, it seems to me, dead Syracuse should

be approached. With the death of Syracuse the land died too; died, and lies at rest.

At the station of Lentini (Leontini) I get a peep at the historic lake, a very dead sea, with sad, lone shores, the largest lake in all Sicily, and excellent for wild fowl. Look at it while you may!

I nudge Physic (now, I grieve to say, fast asleep). He smiles faintly, looks up at me, turns himself round, then sleeps again.

The French dignitary and his clerical young man are in the same condition.

We are now half-way to Syracuse. The light is waning. In that hollow lies what was once ancient Leontini, the ally of Athens, the foe of Syracuse, and as old a colony as Naxos or Catania. Not a stone remains.

Cities, like individuals, are born to misfortune. So it was with Leontini; made captive by Hiero, crushed by Dionysius, or ground down by its own tyrants, the only passing gleam of prosperity came to it when Timoleon, in his crusade against Sicilian tyrants. drove out Icetas for a while.

In our own day Leontini is still a most unlucky little town, smitten by malaria and earthquakes, and poor, beyond the power of words to describe.

Once it must have been prosperous, spite of its acknowledged pauperism in the Athenian war.

Pausanias tells us "that the men of Leontini dedicated from their private means a statue of Jupiter seven feet high at Olympia, as well as the Eagles and the Thunderbolt, in accordance with the Poets." (One would like to know how the native artist *put in* the Thunderbolt!) Another statue, of Hera, ten cubits high, at the harbour mouth, is recorded.

Pausanias makes various mention of statues by Sicilian artists, not only in Sicily, but in Southern Italy, meaning Tarentum, Crotona, and Rhegium, as well as Syracuse.

Various plaster offerings representing chariots and charioteers, and single or double horses, were cast in Sicily and sent to Olympia by the Dinomenes, Gelon and Hiero, to celebrate their various victories, all more or less rudimental, for as Pliny says of a Rhegium sculptor, "he was the first to express veins and sinews, and to treat the hair more naturally."

The realism of art at that time is indicated by the story of the famous cow of Myron, to which the bulls were attracted by its likeness to nature.

Now, Myron was the master of Phidias. At this moment the French dignitary woke

up, read the name of the station "Lentini," and expressed unfeigned surprise. He possessed, or desired to assume, classical proclivities. When not asleep he ostentatiously handled Thucydides as well as a notebook and pencil, announcing his intention of recording his "*impressions de voyage*," but the dismal aspect of Leontini seemed to drive any idea of this kind out of his head.

After a lengthened conversation with his secretary, and many amazed glances at the station, he put back his pencil and books into his pocket with the air of an ill-used man, and relapsed into slumber.

What he expected I do not know.

Perhaps, like the American who opined "that Rome would be a very nice place if the public buildings were in better repair," the Frenchman expected to see a bran-new Boulvard by the lonely lake!

CHAPTER II.

The dreaded Trasborgo.—Megara, Hybla.—Epicharmus.—Glorious Night.—Arrival at Syracuse.—The Doctor and his Valise.—The Hotel.—Tableau!

S night approached, we suddenly drew up at a platform.

Is it a station? No. An accident? No. Yet everyone is getting out. The platform is crowded with passengers; there are guards, boys, old women, dogs, a monkey in a cage, and an old man on crutches.

I wake up Physic. He, bounding out of sleep, wakes the priest and his secretary. It is getting dark. What is it?

"*Bisogna scendere,*" says the gruff voice of a guard, as he flings open the door. "*E trasborgo!*"

We get out.

I cling on to Physic, Physic clings on to me; Furiosa, the maid, hangs on to both. I have a settled conviction that our loose bags and luggage will be stolen. I am not afraid

for my box, I have a ticket in my pocket for *that.* But the bags!

We try to carry them, but are unmercifully jostled by the crowd. A light brigade of eager boys bear down upon us. We are the last of a long line proceeding onwards down the platform.

The boys, infant brigands doubtless, almost naked, as brown as nuts and as nimble as squirrels, insist upon carrying the bags—a bag for each boy, and the railway wrappers between two, which is confusing. I scream, Physic swears, and Furiosa gives chase, at which the boys laugh and outstrip her. (Furiosa is a thin, spare, little woman, of uncertain age.) Physic's broad, good-humoured face inspires no fear. So the boys chatter in an incomprehensible gibberish, still keeping fast hold of the bags.

Seeing, however, that all the other travellers confide their belongings to other boys (they are like a flight of crows), we make no more resistance, only we keep them well in front, under our eye.

Not an easy thing to do, for with those naked feet of theirs, they can run, while we are embarrassed by civilization and shoes.

Down a slippery flight of wooden steps we go, lighted by pine-torches held by peasants in

knee-breeches, like ragged Irishmen (torches everywhere throwing an infernal glare upon the scene); then down again to a lower platform, where we are pulled up short by a deep chasm, between cloven banks—a chasm through which dark waters are rushing with a thundering roar. This would be utterly overwhelming, but for the sight of a raft, nearly as broad as the chasm, waiting to ferry us across.

This, then, is the broken bridge of which the General spoke. In the red torch glare we can see its gaping arches wide apart over our heads.

On the other side, another flight of steps—another avenue of torches (torches—an obligato—one may say, in a "Sinfonia" of darkness), and the light brigade of boys running.

"If this is trasborgo, I rather like him!" I remark, laughing, to Physic, as he hands me up the second flight of steps out of the raft, where the tenderest care has been taken of us by half-clad natives in knee-breeches, on, into another train waiting to receive us on the opposite side; the little boys keeping close to us all the while, and looking up at us with such bright beseeching eyes, as each deposits his bag on the seat, as well as the two who bear the railway

wrappers like a mummy between them, that we shower down coppers upon them, *ad libitum*.

In the carriage we laugh again at trasborgo, and the two French ecclesiastics join in, and we all agree, some in very bad French, others in worse Italian, "that we never will believe anything we hear in Sicily again."

Now, as to the constant breaking of the rails, I do not question the fact, it is too notorious. But I do dispute that the traveller is not well cared for. I have since met my friend "trasborgo" in many localities, and always accompanied by an amount of preparation and attention, almost incredible in the wild solitudes through which Sicilian railways carry you.

Again we are steaming through the night among the desolate, formless hills leading to Syracuse — on, for long miles, until, gently descending, we dip towards the sea, round what seems the basin of a spacious bay.

The waves lap upon the beach—the revolving lamps of a distant lighthouse shed a scattered glare. Without knowing it, we have passed the site of ancient Megara upon the rise—part of the great ridge of Hybla over Syracuse. The waves are in the Bay of Thapsus.

Megara, named like colonial Naxos, from

the parent-city in Greece, was an outpost against the Athenians in the siege of Syracuse. It was afterwards besieged and taken by Marcellus, whose fleet long hung about the Bay of Thapsus, under Hybla, until he found means to enter the great harbour, just as the Athenians, under Nicias, had done before him.

We do not want Strabo's authority to remind us of "honey from Hybla"; it is a household word.

One celebrated name comes to us from Megara (it is the doctor who recalls it).

Epicharmus, philosopher and dramatist, who first adapted the ancient Mimes into regular dialogue, and shaped a central plot, round which the various characters gyrated to a conclusion.

"Something, I take it," says Physic, "as dull as Walter Landor's 'Imaginary Conversations,' worked up with a spice of Archaic coarseness to suit the rude Dorian taste. Epicharmus ridiculed the gods too. In this there was a touch of Socratian humour. We know something of what this ridicule was, from the paintings on ancient vases. But Epicharmus was wiser than Alcibiades, he let alone the mysteries."

Epicharmus was a Pythagorean speculator and thinker. Wandering about, like many

another Greek poet and philosopher of that day, he came from Cos to Megara, then to Syracuse.

Epicharmus happened to be in Megara when Gelon took it. This led to his knowing Gelon, and going with him to Syracuse, where he was patronized by the whole family of the Dinomenës. As a creator, Epicharmus is remarkable.

From the rudimental mass of mythôlogic myth, he moulded something tangible.

The revolving lighthouse that I see, is on the Point of Agosta, at the further horn of the Bay of Thapsus.

While I gaze, star after star peeps out of the deep vault above. Then the whole heavens seem aglow.

How glorious! Not one, but millions of stars blaze out. The Pleiades twinkle in sisterly unison. The mighty track of that aerial highway, the Via Lactea, trails like a huge serpent in the sky; and the prosaic moon, with her bleared, chequered face, repeats herself upon the waves.

Then the doctor, who is also learned in the stars, looks out for the Great Bear ("to see," he says, "how his old friend looks in these unfamiliar latitudes"), and just catches sight of his tail.

There is Venus sublimely bright — "the power of love epitomized, and visible to the naked eye" (Physic's own words). Orion sprawling across the sky, in all the ease of masculine power and size; his three belt stars conspicuous; and Cassiopeia, the mother of boastful Andromeda, glittering in her starry chair.

And so, under star-sown skies, and along dark, inarticulate strands, we whistle into Syracuse.

No sooner had I — much elbowed and shoved by modern Syracusans, impatient for their homes—passed a wicket gate, leading to the entrance of the station, than I was seized upon by a Smart young man, who informed me "I was an English Princess," and "that he had been directed by the Prefect to escort me to the hotel in his own carriage, which was waiting outside."

Nor was this Smart young man to be reasoned with. If I had not been a Princess, but a gorilla, he could not have kept firmer hold of me, until he placed me in a high cabriolet from which it would have been impossible to escape, repeating continually, "that he acted by the Prefect's orders."

And he would have driven off with me then and there, had I not vehemently remon-

strated; representing to him that I was not alone, but had a companion whom I could not leave.

Nor had I long to wait; for, high above the din of departing citizens, I hear the voice of Physic, uplifted in tones of rage. His voice speedily followed by his bulky person, shouldering, right and left, indignant Syracusans.

"Never, No, never!" he cries, "shall I see my beloved valise again. All I have in the world is in it—all—all. The valise which has travelled with me in Chinese Tartary, and to the Himalayas, and Timbuctoo! Never, Never more! Why did I come to Syracuse?"

While he asks me this question, impossible to answer, he is precipitated into the cabriolet by the Smart young man, who by some official legerdemain, has already possessed himself of my maid, also my solitary box, and all my bags, and who now seizes on the Doctor as a detail in the Princess's luggage.

In the moments he can spare from me, the Smart young man assures Physic "that his valise is safe; that he will find it at the hotel; that he will answer for it."

"What is that impudent puppy saying? What does he mean with his jargon?" asks the indignant Physic, growing purple in the

face. "What the devil has he to do with me and my valise? I have a great mind to kick him."

Then his mood changes, and a look of perfect indifference comes over the broad disc of his ruddy countenance.

"Don't mention it, I beg," he replies gravely, in answer to my consolatory phrases. "It is of no consequence. I am resigned and happy. I shall have reason to remember Syracuse."

Then in another tone with a sly wink at me—

"This is what comes of travelling with a Princess! Let the valise go to the deuce!" Here he flings up his arms in mock despair. "I do not complain!"

I never laughed so much in my life. The Doctor laughed too; even the grim visage of Furiosa relaxed into a smile. I think the Smart young man must have thought us all mad.

And so we drive a long, long way in darkness, until we cross the three drawbridges, the three moats, and under the three portcullises with which Charles V. chose to adorn what was left of Inner Syracuse; then through dark and narrow streets, dimly lighted by the dingiest of oil lamps, we rattle up to an hotel.

The Smart young man hurls himself from

the box to assist me in getting out. The better to reach me he drags poor Physic out first.

"How dare you, young man?" the Doctor is exclaiming in a loud voice, when suddenly he stops short; a look of beatitude comes over his face, his eyes glisten. There, in the doorway, lies his beloved valise!

TABLEAU.

Physic, mounting a flight of very dark and dirty stairs, hugging his valise; the Smart young man rushing after him, under the impression that he has stolen part of the Princess's luggage!

CHAPTER III.

"Cicero upon Verres."—Ancient Syracuse.—Ortygia the Outer City.—What to Know.—Bad Inns.—Good Wines.

"YOU have often heard," says Cicero, speaking upon Verres, "that Syracuse is the largest of Greek cities, and the most beautiful of all capitals.

"And so it is in truth, as reported. For it is both strong of natural position, and striking to behold from whichever side it is approached, whether by land or sea. The ports are almost enclosed by buildings, and form part of every view. They have separate entrances, but communicate at the opposite extremity. At their junction, that part called the island (Ortygia) is separated from the mainland by a narrow strait, and reunited by a bridge. So vast is Syracuse that it may be said to consist of four very large cities." (Cicero did not include the suburbs, Temenitis, or Epipolæ.)

"One of these is the island mentioned, Ortygia, which is enclosed by the two ports, and projects towards the mouth and entrance of each. In it is the palace which was formerly that of King Hiero (II.), but is now the residence of our Prætor. Also there are several sacred edifices; two of them far superior to the rest: one a temple of Minerva, the other of Diana, which before the arrival of the man Verres" (against whom Cicero is pleading) "was most richly adorned."

"At the extremity of the island is the fountain of Arethusa, of incredible size, and abounding with fish, which would be entirely covered by the sea were it not protected by a massive wall.

"Another of the city's quarters of Syracuse is called Achradina, in which are a Forum of very large size, most beautiful Porticoes, a richly-ornamented Pyrtaneium, a spacious Curia, and a magnificent temple to Jupiter Olympus. The other parts of the city are occupied by private buildings, laid out in one continuous wide street, with many cross ones.

"The third city is called Tyche, from an ancient temple of Fortune which it contains. In it is a spacious Gymnasium, with many other temples, and it is the part of the town most densely inhabited.

"The fourth city is called Neapolis. At its upper end is a Greek theatre of very great size, besides two splendid temples of Ceres and Libera, and a statue of Apollo, called Temenitis, of very great beauty and colossal size."

A city consisting of four or five cities and suburbs, each with its own name, history, and monuments, further divided into two parts, *Outer* Syracuse on the mainland, and *Inner* Syracuse on the island, is difficult to grasp.

But when even the ruins of these five cities (all but one, Ortygia on the island) have utterly disappeared, the difficulty increases ten-fold.

Such is Syracuse.

Inner Syracuse on the island, the modern town, occupies the site of the original Corinthian colony, founded by Arcias, B.C. 724.

Ortygia, misnamed "the Acropolis," for it is lower than the rest, is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel, connecting the Greater and the Lesser Harbours. It is this channel, or *fosse*, for it is now little more, which is crossed by the three bridges we passed last night, built by Charles V. of Spain. Cicero mentions *a bridge* in the Roman days, as connecting Ortygia with the mainland. Naturally,

in all ages, there would be a bridge; now there are three.

The island of Ortygia lies in the open sea. On the east side is the Great Harbour; the southern, or furthest point sea-ward, marked by the mediæval castle of General Maniace (on the site of the temple of Juno) opposite the Cape and Promontory of Plemmyrium, about half a mile across. Cape and Castle form the harbour-mouth.

On the mainland, bordering the Lesser Harbour, across the bridges, lay Outer Syracuse, terracing upwards on the surface of rocky hills.

Outer Syracuse consisted, as Cicero says, "of Achradina on the low slip of shore, immediately opposite Ortygia; of Neapolis, or New Town, on the rising ground to the left; and of Tyche and Temenitis on the face of the rise; Epipolæ, "the furthest off of all," and the highest of all the cities, extended over an elevated table-land, six miles distant.

Temenitis and Epipolæ are spoken of, and were considered as suburbs. Indeed, the whole of Outer Syracuse may be considered as a congerie of suburbs, only the suburbs were five times bigger than the parent city of Ortygia, on the island.

Even on the spot it is hard enough to distinguish what is, from what is not; to paint the wondrous history of the past on the bare foreground of the present, to imagine a city fourteen miles round, shrunk up into a little island; just as Freeman says, "As if London were reduced to the Tower and Tower Hill, or Paris to the island of the Seine"; but, to understand Syracuse this must be done.

Also, you must be ready to fall back into the full current of Greek and Roman history, and accept its details as though actual and present.

Broadly speaking, there is no history of Syracuse since the days of the Greek tyrants—Gelon, the two Hieros, Dionysius the Elder, his son the Younger, Agathocles, and Timoleon and Dion the Deliverers.

Every rustic artist represents one or the other on the cart he is painting, when not induced to make forays into French history. The Republicans prefer "the Deliverers," as democrats; the Conservatives, and they are few, select the Tyrants. The Syracusan children are called by Greek names, even the dogs. Our dirty waiter is "Themistocles," and our padrone is very proud of a mongrel hound answering to the name of "Pericles."

Greek names are written at the corners of the streets; bays, caves, rocks, and quarries bear them also; and right or wrong, Greek history is flung about with a prodigality that would astonish an Oxford professor.

As to the Smart young man, our cicerone, he tossës classic names to and fro as if they were marbles and he were playing with them.

Not the names only, but the lives of the home-bred Tyrants and the Deliverers must be mastered familiarly, also the minutest details of the Athenian siege, the interminable Punic wars, from Gelon to Agathocles, the coming in of the Romans under Marcellus, the Norman and Saracenic sieges, all appertaining to Belisarius and the Goths, and Maniace with the Saracens, otherwise a visit to Syracuse will be a pain rather than a pleasure.

And here I am in this same famous city of Syracuse, utterly discomfited and disheartened by reason of the badness of the inns!

The Smart young man has taken me to two —the Aquila d'Oro and the Sole. Impossible to say which is the worst! Only I give my vote for the Sole, because there *is* the sun, lighting up the squalid, barrack-like walls, and playing antic-tricks upon the stone floors; moreover, by craning my neck very much and standing on

tiptoe, I can just look down over the blue expanse of the Great Harbour, and on the tree-tops of the Marina, terracing its shore.

But oh! the desolation! The food, the cooking, the waiting! Heavens! It is life reduced to its most primitive conditions! In a land teeming with flesh, fruit, and game, with an ocean lapping the shores, stored with the choicest fish, there is nothing to eat, and no one to cook!

The night wind rattles through every cranny and under every door; the windows tremble, a smell of musty apples pervades the rooms, opening one into the other like a Chinese puzzle, and a waiter not washed, and stinking of garlic, hovers about!

Thus do we, myself, the Doctor, and S——, whom we find at the Sole Hotel, discuss such supper as is vouchsafed to us. Even in my borrowed plumes of an English Princess, I encounter the common lot of mortals.

But do not misunderstand me. The food is bad and scanty, and the beds are coarse and hard, but both table and beds are clean; and the wine! Ah! I am no drinker, but I wish I were, to appreciate their excellency.

Physic, a moderate man, helped himself to glass after glass of Albanello, and then finished

off with Amareno (this last with a cherry flavour); and S——, whom we found in very delicate health, and much fatigued, woke up to declare that "Isola" was the nuttiest, richest sherry that ever moistened the lip of mortal. So thus we go comforted to our hard beds!

CHAPTER IV.

Spanish Defences.—A Poverty-stricken City.—Loved by the Goddesses.—The Long, Broad Street.—What Hosts have Passed?

THE morning broke with the threat of a visit from the Prefect; to escape him I wandered out as soon as I had breakfasted, and seated myself upon a rampart close to our hotel.

The day is lovely; a December sun tempered by a sea-breeze, soft and creamy, calling forth bright, delicate lights, and transparent shadows; nothing hard or positive, all neutral tints, dear to the eye, and suggestive of the mysterious and the unknown!

Yet my first impression of Syracuse is bewilderment; a maze of dirty, mediæval streets, beginning and ending in fortifications, with here and there a Gothic church, or a low-fronted barocco palace, with stone balconies, ogee arches, dog-tooth mouldings, and pointed

doorways, all woe-begone and dreary; the aspect as of a Spanish town run to seed, with here and there the pillared ruins of a Grecian temple.

In modern Syracuse the Spaniard has set his mark as plainly as the Grecian did of old.

The arms of Charles V., surmounted by a fat, imperial crown, announce themselves too often and in too conspicuous a position for any one to forget him or his inheritance.

You may, or you may not, remember, that Gonsalvo di Cordova conquered Sicily for his masters, Ferdinand and Isabella, and that their grandson, Charles V., built the city walls and the three bridges on the foundations of Hiero's palace, at the weakest point of Inner Syracuse, because nearest to the mainland.

One can see the huge, uncemented Greek blocks worked into the Spanish masonry, a strange link between the Classic Tyrants who trod out political liberty in Sicily, and the mediæval Tyrant, who failed to tread it out in Flanders.

The inhabitants of this once great city—the rival of Athens and the mistress of Sicily—are now reduced to a miserable twenty thousand souls.

Such as I see them passing they look polite

and smiling, the men with the long Phrygian cap hanging down on the shoulder, and the women with black veils.

But the poverty! It is apparent at a glance. Open doors disclose hovels with earthen floors, no better than pig-styes, and rags, sunken features, and the dull, dreary look of suffering, are everywhere.

A group of keen-eyed, hungry-faced old crones, huddled together in a filthy corner spinning, recall to me the lines of Theocritus about the Sicilian distaffs. But I confess, I find the Syracusan old women much like any others of the South. Hairless, foul, and horrible; oftener asleep or begging than at work. The young men have a handsome air, with low foreheads and classic profiles, without that murderous caste of countenance so repulsive at Palermo and elsewhere in the west, where the Arab blood prevails.

By daylight I can see how small is modern Syracuse; just the little island of Ortygia, which Corinthian Archias filched from the Sikels.

Before selecting Ortygia as the Doric capital of Sicily, Archias consulted the Delphic oracle.

"Which will you have?" asked the High priest; "wealth with an unhealthy soil, or poverty and fine air?"

Archias chose wealth and fever, and was straightway directed to the island of Ortygia situated on a swamp. Thus we have the highest authority for considering Syracuse unhealthy.

Here, too, one notes the love of the Corinthians for an isthmus and a double harbour. Primitive Syracuse in Ortygia, dividing a great sea lake into two unequal portions, the Greater and the Lesser Harbour, is Corinth in miniature. Peloponnesus answers to Ortygia, and the isthmus of Corinth to those three irrepressible bridges of Charles V., connecting it with the mainland.

The stately buildings that came to line the "Island"—Dionysius' Castle, or Acropolis, as Plutarch calls it (though, indeed, there never was an acropolis at Syracuse); his palace, gardens, mint, prison, arsenal, and magazine of arms for seventy thousand men; his mausoleum, erected by his son, Dionysius the Younger (to be seen by all who entered Syracuse); the Pentapylæ, or five-gated fortress, to guard the entrance of the island; the famous sun-dial, looking eastward (surrounded by portico and bazaars), upon which Dion mounted to harangue the people; the Decasteria, or courts of justice, erected by Timoleon when Dionysius' palace

was razed to the ground; the Hexacontaclinus (or house of sixty beds) of Agathocles (a Sicilian Tower of Babel, overtopping all the Ortygian temples, destroyed by the gods, who struck it by lightning); the public granaries; the Temple of Juno, on the present site of the mediæval castle of Maniace, at the harbour mouth, within which stood the famous statue of Gelon, which alone was spared, when all the others in Syracuse were judged and executed like living men; the great Doric temple of Minerva, where Ducetius took refuge, now the cathedral; and the Temple and Grove of Diana—have all either disappeared altogether, or been absorbed into ugly walls and sea-worn ramparts.

When we hear of the "Seat of Artemis," and the "Sanctuary of the virgin goddesses," it means Ortygia. All the early pagan associations are with "the Island." Diana, the "Protectress," was as great at Syracuse as at Ephesus, and Minerva, the "Guardian," as much honoured as at Athens.

Hither came Diana's nymphs—Arethusa, of Elis, flying before Alpheus to hide herself as a fountain in the darkness of the goddess' grove; and Cyane, changed into a pool by Pluto for attempting to stay him in his flight with Proserpine.

Beyond, upon the mainland to the right, I see the long, sad lines of what once was Outer Syracuse.

When the inner city on the island grew too small, in the time of Gelon, it spread itself out on the mainland of Achradina and the adjacent heights.

The eastward extremity of Outer Syracuse melts into the sea at the Capuchin Convent. The Creek of San Panagia and the Bay of Trogilus lie behind.

To my left, a little upon the heights, and partly upon the flats, marked by the road to Florida, extends what once was New Town. Above were the suburbs of Tyche and Temenitis, each clustering round a tutelary temple. These temples—in Tyche, to Fortune; in Temenitis, to Apollo—are mentioned as early as B.C. 466, in the outbreak under Thrasybulus, brother and successor of Hiero the First. They were coeval with Ducetius.

In Tyche were also the temples of Ceres (Demeter) and Proserpine, built by Gelon, B.C. 500.

Ceres was peculiarly a Sicilian goddess. She was invoked as "the great mother," and her anger was as terrible as that of the Palician gods.

When Timoleon sailed from Corinth to drive out the Tyrants, he was accompanied, says Plutarch, by Ceres and Proserpine, a galley being specially fitted out, which was called the "galley of the goddesses," and "led the fleet, shedding a divine light all through the night."

The carrying off the brass image of the most "venerable" Demeter from the great temple of Enna was the darkest crime charged upon Verres by Cicero

The mass of the outer city, as I see it from the Spanish ramparts, must have laid in the hollow of the hills between Achradina and Neapolis.

Here stretched up that long broad street, the Via Lata, mentioned by Cicero, leading to the great temples, theatre, and amphitheatre, the Latomiæ, and Street of Tombs; on to Epipolœ. Among white paths and garden walls, I can see the track of a dusty road losing itself on a gentle rise; a reproduction, possibly, of that storied way.

Not an inch of that hill-side before me but is eloquent in classic history.

Aloft on Tyche Marcellus wept over Syracuse, and near at hand lived Archimedes, who defended it so bravely.

By this broad street passed Pompey and Augustus, and the deliverers, Timoleon and Dion, and Hiero in triumph from Catanian and Etruscan victories.

Here, too, Dionysius hurried up and down to speed the rising of his famous walls, and here the Roman prætors—among them the "man Verres" came and went.

Down that long street passed Cicero, on his way to seek, among the ruins and brushwood, for the tomb of Archimedes near the Agrarian Gate; and, long before him, Pindar and Æschylus, and solemn Plato, come from Greece to Syracuse to teach wisdom by academic rule to a royal profligate; and its stones must have echoed—oh, strange contrast!—to the steps of another great teacher, St. Paul, going from the harbour to preach where now stands the Christian church of San Marziano, in Achradina.

Those dark cavities of black, against the white sky-line of limestone hills, are the famous Latomiæ, prisons, quarries, and Nymphæum, all in one.

On that hill-side in Neapolis the people crowded to see the play, and such Athenians as escaped from the massacre of the Asinarius, begged along the pavements, chanting Euripides, in the hot summer air.

What hosts have passed by! What carnage! From every quarter of the globe enemies have come to Syracuse, always and in all ages the land-mark for invasion.

The heart was taken out of her by the Romans. From the time that Marcellus pitched his camp in Tyche, Syracuse drooped and languished. The flesh was torn from her bones by Vandals and Saracens.

To Byzantine, Greek, Goth, Saracen, Norman, Teuton, and Spaniard, she fell an easy prey.

The city hills looked on the Great Harbour, and the Great Harbour looks to the bright sky, the Spanish walls of Ortygia glitter in the sunlight, and Charles's portcullises rise where the Pentapylœ once stood. The rocky outline of Epipolœ catches the first rays of morning as of yore, and Hybla and distant Etna still throne in the clear air; but it is but a shadow, Syracuse is dead. The nations have buried her.

CHAPTER V.

The Village Green.—National Monuments.—Disappointment.—Party to Epipolæ.—The "Smart Young Man."—"Brook of the Washerwomen."—Timoleon's Villa.—Pagan Landscape.

ONCE disentangled from the tortuous streets and the portcullises and drawbridges of modern Syracuse, you emerge upon an open space along the shore—the Village Green, as one may say, of modern Syracuse upon the mainland.

Here young men and maidens pass and repass, on festa days, to the churches of San Giovanni, San Marziano, and Santa Lucia; and old men smoke and doze, and beggars and human waifs generally, huddle under the bare white trunks of what once was an avenue of mulberry and elm-trees, reduced by age and sea-storms to mere poles; and there are little stalls, with mandarin oranges, plums, and dried figs threaded upon sticks; and bits of paper fly about, and children tumble upon their

heads, or play *morra* in the shade; and lame horses graze.

Yet it is scarcely green at all; muddy if wet, and dusty if dry: the most uncanny Village Green I ever saw—hoar with age, and crossed and recrossed (as with deep wrinkles) by ragged little paths, threading along under whitening orchard walls.

This Green was the ancient Forum. One melancholy, weather-beaten column of red-veined marble, bereft of its capital, is there to witness it.

The Forum lay beside the open sea and the Lesser Harbour; around rose those stately porticoes, so bravely set with statues, and lined with marble slabs and pillars—lauded by Cicero —and the richly-ornamented Pyrtaneium, with its statue of Sappho, "stolen by the man Verres." (There is nothing Cicero, in his orations against Verres, deplores so much as the loss of that statue of Sappho, the *chef d'œuvre* of Silamon, and according to him, "the most inimitable work of art ever beheld.")

Here, too, lay the Curia, the statue of Marcellus in front, where senate and priests assembled within walls dignified by historic sculptures: the Timoleonteium (Timoleon's tomb), with porticoes, gardens, and a palestra, in which games where held in his honour; and

the great Temple of Jupiter Olympus, built by Hiero II. (not to be confounded with that one on the Olympeium, dedicated to Jupiter Urios), containing the statue of the god; also noted by Cicero as having been carried off to Rome by Verres. There were but three other statues of Jupiter in the world to compare with it for beauty and workmanship.

All this strip of level shore, indeed, about the Forum, was devoted in the Grecian time to national monuments, religious processions, the burial of the dead, triumphs after victory, games, and ceremonies.

Here Gelon was proclaimed king, after his victory over the Carthaginians at Himera; Timoleon received the thanks of the grateful city he had saved; and Agathocles sounded those fatal trumpets, the signal of massacre and pillage.

Standing within the Curia, or under the shelter of the elegant colonnades of the Pyrtaneium, the Syracusan citizen could admire the effect of the setting sun on the painted walls of the Pentapylœ, observe the working of Archimedes' bronze rams over one of its five gates (by a mechanical contrivance the rams turned on a pivot and bleated, to indicate the direction of the wind), watch the shadow on the

historic sun-dial, or pass the time in counting the triremes and quinqueremes constructing in the arsenals of the Lesser Harbour—much as we now, on the same spot, contemplate (I, for my part, much against my will) those distracting three portcullises and three drawbridges of Charles II., which pursue me everywhere.

Outside the circuit of the Village Green, from which opens up that broad, dusty road, I presume to be the Via Lata in the hollow of the hills, follows a labyrinth of rocks and orchard walls. (I can see no pear-trees, from the snowy blossoms of which, "white Achradina" was christened), also three Norman churches, very much alike, and the front of the Capuchin Convent.

Such is Achradina as I see it.

Of these three Norman churches upon the shore, I know not which is the ugliest—Santa Lucia, with its Catherine wheel window, like a monstrous eye, mocking the pagan ruins; the meagre arches of San Giovanni and Santa Maria di Gesù; or the uniform buff-coloured front of the Capuchin Convent beyond, on the furthest point of Achradina, where waves come booming in from hollow caverns filled with bones.

As I gaze upon the whitened wilderness,

depression seizes me. I ask myself: "What interest can I draw out of these stony heights? What history?' What poetry? These blank, nude shores, and desolate garden walls, and vineyards, what do they say? A very city-skeleton, yet wanting that form which even skeletons retain!"

"Churches and Convents! Santa Lucia and Capuchins at pagan Syracuse!" I exclaim, looking round. What a mockery!

I am addressing myself to the Doctor, seated stolidly beside me, grasping a tall stick, prepared, as it would seem, for any emergency, by his resolute look, and to S—— opposite, who, if all things fail me at Syracuse, will never, I know, fail me in kindness.

(I am wofully disenchanted, I confess it. After Messina and Catania the bareness of Syracuse is crushing. When I come to disentangle its confusing localities, and to frame them duly with their history, I get to like the place and its angular, unpicturesque aspect well. Now, I am in the neophyte or moonstruck stage, overwhelmed with the unfitness of things in general, and groping about to comprehend them.)

It strikes me all at once that I have not explained that the Doctor, S——, and I, are

seated in a rickety fiacre, bound for the Castle of Euryalus, on Epipolœ, six miles off, and that the "Smart young man," who positively refuses to leave the English Princess, is seated on the box, offering explanations, to which Physic refuses to listen. Also, that two mounted carabineers in uniform, with cocked hats and little brass fusees going off all over them, are stationed behind us; the carabineers, a delicate attention on the part of the prefect towards the friend of General de Sonnaz, such as a bouquet or a bonbonnière would be in more civilized latitudes.

Our long halt on the Village Green, over which these warriors trot every day of their life, evidently puzzles them greatly. They stare, pull their moustaches, whisper to each other, snuff, smoke, and finally give themselves up to slumber; their quiet horses, as much as the flies will allow them, dozing also.

Why we, Physic, S——, and I should have come so far to Syracuse, and turned our backs on the maiden goddesses, Diana and Minerva, in their island city of Ortygia; on Arethusa bubbling in her fountain; and Cyane clear and beautiful under her sheltering canopy of papyrus—is more than I can say. It was one of those freaks inexplicable to one's self—sheer

contradiction perhaps; or the wondrous splendour of the day, or chance. *Chi lo sa?* Anyhow, we four are seated in a carriage, bound for Epipolœ, a good six English miles away.

On a paved road blanched with dust, we gaze over desolate flats, pressing up to the edge of the limestone rock, on which stood Outer Syracuse.

Before us is the Great Harbour, vast as an inland lake; strangely unaltered since the old Greek days. Sadly blue its tideless waters lie, as if nothing more warlike than Florio's steamers had ever ploughed their tranquil bosom. The low shore is shut in by the sombre rise of Plemmyrium, running on to the harbour-mouth, where the sparkling sea-surf rolls in, in banks of foam.

If you inquired of a modern Syracusan where Plemmyrium was, he would stare and inform you that no such place existed; that the low rocks running out to sea are called Isola, and that it is famous for its wine.

So much for history.

To the left the quays of the modern town blaze out in the sunshine, belted by ramparts—a formless mass of flat-roofed, white-walled houses, set in the brilliancy of an azure sea.

In some damp-looking gardens close upon

our road, our cicerone points out a slimy ditch, which he informs us is the "Brook of the Washerwomen."

He speaks under difficulty; every time he opens his mouth the Doctor interrupts him, with a menacing motion of his stick.

"Young man," he says, at last, his face flushing ominously; "we have got George Dennis' 'Guide to Syracuse,' and George Dennis ought to know if any man does. Perhaps I can tell *you* that the 'Brook of the Washerwomen,' fed by the overflow of the broken aqueducts in Epipolæ and Tyche, marks the division between the suburbs of Achradina and Neapolis. You see," he adds, turning to me; "it is all marsh down there along the edge of the harbour on to Anapus and the Olympeium, on which you know the Temple of Jupiter Urios once stood. This particular marsh was called in Siculian *Syraco*, from which, it is imagined, the city took its name. Don't believe that fellow! He knows nothing. A sorry imbecile!"

Between the two, I make out that the "Brook of the Washerwomen" (true to its name, a snowy display of white linen lay upon its margin) marks the extreme points of the Athenian camp, after Nicias was driven from

the high land of Epipolœ, and his fortresses on Plemmyrium, by Gylippus. Observe, that before I have been in Syracuse two days, I have traced out with my own eyes the localities of three of the greatest wars in Grecian story—that of the Athenians, in the siege of Syracuse, under Nicias and Demosthenes, at Epipolœ and the Great Harbour; of the Carthaginians, under Himilicon, upon Plemmyrium; and of the Romans, under Marcellus, upon the heights of the Outer city.

I can also understand the pestilent miasma, predicted by the Delphic oracle, which contaminates Syracuse on the land side, and ruins it as a permanent residence, spite of its lovely climate.

In all times, an enemy encamped on the low land bordering the harbour was doomed. The Syracusans might fold their hands and sit idle; death did their work for them, and did it quickly. Readers of Thucydides, Plutarch, and Diodorus, know this for themselves. Those who are not readers, I inform that the shores of the Great Harbour, except on the rise of Plemmyrium, where the sun never seems to shine, are altogether swampy water-meadows and salt works.

That Plemmyrium is not much healthier

than the plain, is proved by the plague which smote the Carthaginians there; 395 B.C.

That particular plague might have been imported from Africa; but no invading force has, in any age, escaped some poisonous infection. That the Romans under Marcellus fared better, was due to the elevated position of their camp upon the hills, and the superiority of their sanitary laws.

We all feel this realism to be sad; but no one as much as I. To me it seems as if Syracuse had fallen back into the primitive sea-marsh from which the genius of Gelon and Dionysius called it forth to reign.

We drive dreamily on under the lee of the rocky ridge upon which once was New Town, now Old indeed, and seamed with rents, fragments of caves, and tombs. Breaks in the low cliffs lead up to ancient foundations—the Temple of Fortune, perhaps, or Grecian gateways; the Hexapylum, or the Scala Græca, or towers of defence.

This rocky ridge, open to the plain, was lined with walls and ramparts. Now there is neither form nor colour even in the landscape —a dull sage-green, verging into brown, with distant blue-grey Hybla far beyond, and the pale dome of Etna outlined among the clouds.

By and by we come upon patches of young barley at the Podere di Mira; castor-oil plants wave over broken walls, and fluttering pepper-trees and oleanders cast faint shadows.

"Principessa!" cries the Smart young man, suddenly from the box, with the consciousness of having something to say too good to keep. —We are passing a flat-roofed villa, shaped like a chest, close by the road in a little clump of magnolias.

"Principessa, if it be permitted"—his eye is on Physic's stick, very freely used to illustrate discourse. Now, Physic, since the episode of the lost valise, has conceived such an antipathy to him, and shows it so unmistakably, that the Smart young man is in bodily fear of him—"That is the Villa Tremiglia, three miles from Syracuse, the site of Timoleon's house, where he lived on his estate, Eccellenza, after he was blind, and retired from public business."

"Hold your tongue!" cries the Doctor, exasperated at this long speech. "Do you imagine we don't know all about it?"

"The Eccellenza must know a great deal, then," replied the Smart young man, pushed beyond endurance. "The position of Timoleon's country house is much disputed. There is Timoleon's tomb, too, above in Neapolis."

"You are a blockhead!" shouts the Doctor, at the top of his voice. "What you say shows it. Everybody knows Timoleon's tomb was in Achradina, near the Forum. Plutarch says so. Do you dare to gainsay history? What a hole!" he continues, turning to contemplate the villa; "not at all the elegant and agreeable retreat Plutarch talks of, where Timoleon was visited by illustrious strangers. Of course, he had his town-house in the city as well. We don't want that fellow of a cicerone at all," he bursts out savagely again; "an empty, pig-headed puppy! Why did you bring him, Mrs. E——? He annoys me exceedingly!"

The Doctor had lost his temper, and notwithstanding his assumed indifference, could not find it again. Fortunately, the sight of some outstanding olive-trees of great beauty, breaking an expanse of emerald grass, dotted with the loveliest lilac-coloured lilies I ever saw, restored him to his usual serenity.

"Observe," says he, elevating that eternal stick of his, which emphasized all his discourses, "that group of hollow olives. Did you ever see anything finer? Why, old Pluto, crown, sceptre, chariot, and all, might have hid in one of them. It is wonderful! There's an uncommonly pagan look about all this landscape. I

should not be a bit surprised to see Ceres or Proserpine walk about in yellow robes, crowned with wheat-ears and poppies; or Hercules himself, with his club and lion's skin, start up. A group of gods or goddesses would just fit in with the background!"

Thus Physic rambles on, on all subjects, until interrupted by a loud fit of coughing from S——. Then, in a moment, he is professionally interested. Armed with various curative lozenges, concealed in his many coat-pockets, he asks all sorts of questions which, poor S——, evidently desirous of being left alone, fences with as best he can.

So the "Smart young man," thanks to Timoleon and the gods, and S——'s cough, gets off this time with a whole skin. But, seeing the effect he produces on the Doctor's nerves, I resolve never to take them out together again.

CHAPTER VI.

Epipolœ.—Castle of Euryalus.—The Doctor's Notions.—Peasants.—Who Built the Castle?—The Athenians and their Defences.—Gylippus to the Rescue.—Revenons à nos Moutons.—The Walls of Dionysius.—Remains of Ancient Walls on Epipolœ.

IT has been uphill for some time, and a very rough road.

We are mounting slowly, with steaming horses, what Thucydides is pleased to call the "Pass of Euryalus," whatever that may mean. If anything were wanting to prove that Thucydides never was at Syracuse, it would be this phrase twice repeated. There is no "Pass of Euryalus" at all; only a moderate rise, on a flat, rocky surface.

"Epipolœ is a rocky point of table-land" (I am still quoting from Thucydides, who is nearer the truth this time), "lying just over Syracuse, but sloping downwards, so that everything within the city is visible from it"

It is called Epipolœ, because it lieth higher than the rest."

Epipolœ, in general terms, in the early days, before the Castle of Euryalus and the temples of "Fortune" and "Apollo" were built, or the suburbs of Tyche and Temenitis, added to the nomenclature.

By this time we are six miles from "the island," yet it is all Syracuse. Now the rocky uplands we have followed, end abruptly in this low headland or scarp, overlooking the sea. And here let me remark once for all, that "the dangerous rocks and terrific precipices" (I quote from Thucydides) "down which armed men were hurled," which give such dramatic force to his relation of the horrors of the night attack of the Athenians, and also to Plutarch's character-sketches of Nicias and Marcellus, are grossly exaggerated. There is no really high ground at all about Syracuse, except Hybla, and Hybla itself is nothing but a lofty line of hills, imposing from the uniform flatness of the plain. Neither Thucydides nor Plutarch could ever have visited Epipolœ. Why, a harmless cow could descend the rise blind folded!

One speaks of "going to Epipolœ," because history gives that generic name to the

high ground commanding Syracuse; but it is the Grecian castle of Euryalus, we have come to visit.

There it stands, a low, grey-white cairn, upon a rugged, grey-white rock! The castle so like the rock, that one has to face it not to believe it to be a dolomitic diadem planted by Nature on its crest.

Beyond everything extant, this view carries one back to the minutest details of Greek military life. The richly-worked helmet, preserved in the British Museum, which Hiero I. wore when fighting the Etruscan, is curious, doubtless, as a relic of antiquity; but what is a helmet to a whole castle? To touching with your fingers the rows of iron hooks, neatly let into the walls for fastening horses' bridles three hundred years before Christ? To moving the slabs before a range of apertures cut in the rock, through which Grecian arrows flew, and by which Grecian troops were screened? To examining stone supports for drawbridges placed, say, during the siege of Marcellus? To passing up and down steps leading into subterranean passages, where not a stone is missing? To peering down, as into an uncovered mystery, a double line of ditches, or fosses of defence, embrasures, galleries, and

magazines, all softened and beautified by folds of passiaflora and clematis? Scrutinizing trap-doors and ladder-rests? And passing out to the ivy-clothed rocks seaward, by cunningly-concealed sally-ports (probably planned by Archimedes), one sally-port high, for a mounted trooper, the other low, for a foot-soldier; and both slanting, so as to deceive the eye from sea or shore? It seems to me that Greek antiquity can go no further.

We get out close to the three stone shafts thrown across the fosse, once supporting the drawbridge of the castle. The carriage draws up in the shade; our gallant carabineers, much incommoded by six miles of continuous bumping under a hot sun, dismount and stretch their legs, as is the manner of horse-soldiers.

One look from the Doctor sends the Smart young man, who is blandly advancing, to the background. He himself much heated, like the carabineers, and flourishing a handkerchief, is volubly discoursing history to S——, lazily hanging on to the carriage-door, a shawl wrapped round his shoulders, looking morbidly indifferent to all sublunary things.

No drowsiness or absence of mind about Physic since we have arrived at Syracuse, but

all to the fore, with a memory and historical knowledge which is perfectly amazing.

He has *clean* forgotten Timbuctoo and Chinese Tartary, and has never once referred to his walk over the Himalayas. His lively fancy revels in finding himself face to face with the old Greeks. To him they are real flesh and blood, and he discusses them with as much excitement as he would the last political telegram.

Calm-minded S——, an excellent scholar, and well read in the classics, is of a more metaphysical turn of mind, and cares less for facts and localities than our good Physic; besides, he has all an invalid's rebellion about being driven when he feels ill and languid.

To-day he is in one of his "dark moods;" and altogether refuses to join in our rattling conversation; wandering away by himself, book in hand, with a melancholy air.

About us gather some half-dozen peasants, in knee-breeches and sheepskins, the long wool outside, offering coins for sale. These the Doctor declares to be spurious.

Whence the peasants rise from is a mystery. All at once we are surrounded, yet we have not heard a footfall, nor seen a living creature anywhere for miles. There is no roof in sight

over the broad stretch of plain; no building, indeed, except a telegraph station, a most discrepant object, perched on the conical top of Belvedere, another abrupt rise, or tumulus, of Siculian origin, some half mile or so distant, in the direction of Hybla.

They are very cringing and humble, these peasants. Seeing we are many; gallant carabineers, too, in the background, with exploding fusees all over them, invariably strike terror into the Sicilian heart; but only give them a chance—let them find us alone, straggling in those subterranean vaults of Euryalus, or away on the plateau, wandering in search of Dionysius' Wall—we should find our unassuming friends develop rapidly into highwaymen or brigands.

Your peasant in Sicily is a born brigand. It is only the force of circumstances which bridles his national propensities; kind Nature has, I am bound to say, so written the fact on his brow, that he must be a fool indeed who would trust him!

Who built Euryalus is an unanswered question, even to the Doctor. (Now, the Doctor knows, or says he knows, everything.)

There are those who hold, with him, that Eurylaus is the fort, or castle, mentioned by

Plutarch as conquered by Dion. Others believe that it was one of the principal stone forts, or towers, occurring at certain intervals on the long walls of Dionysius. That Dionysius the Elder should overlook so strong a position as "the crown of Epipolæ" is not likely.

However that may be, all we know for certain is, that the irregular pile of stones before us—with its little adjacent fort, like an attendant squire, called Euryalus, surrounded by its double fosse, or ditch, to which wild mignonette and purple caper-flowers cling—was brought to its present form by Hiero II., the successor of Agathocles,—Hiero's friend, the great Archimedes, giving the master-touches.

Outside, the castle looks so small and insignificant, one wonders "what one has come out for to see;" but, once within the fortification, Euryalus swells into size and importance, with its spacious courts for horses, and spacious courts for troops; stations for catapults and magazines, subterranean galleries, and long, walled passages.

Underneath, cut in the virgin rock, all remains absolutely *in sitû* from two centuries before Christ. That the upper portion is somewhat chaotic, is more the fault of Saracens and

of earthquakes than of time or war. The Carthaginians came by sea; and, as far as the Roman siege was concerned, Archimedes managed so well with his war-engines and catapults, that Marcellus could nowhere approach the walls.

Outer Syracuse was finally entered by a ruse, and Inner Syracuse by treachery.

In the great Athenian siege, under Nicias, Lamarchus, and Demosthenes, we know Epipolœ was undefended: the Syracuse generals, Hermocrates and Heraclinus, being, in fact, found together napping when Nicias made that first rush from Catania.

He came at night from Catania and Megara, and at once possessed himself of the high land of Epipolœ. Having, up to this time, all things his own way, he pitched his camp here, then sailed into the Great Harbour, as if it were his own; the Syracusans, with no ships to oppose to him, looking on with dismay; then running to hide themselves in "the city," says Thucydides—a vague expression, if you know the ground, seeing that there were many walls and many cities.

On Plemmyrium, at the mouth of the harbour, opposite the temple of Juno, now the modern fortress, Nicias pitched his second camp, and built three forts, besides the citadel,

or fortress he had constructed at Labdalum on Epipolæ, as a principal magazine or depot, connecting it by a line of wall with the Great Harbour. Up to this time all supplies and stores to Epipolæ had to be brought across by land from Thapsus, a tedious proceeding.

And here occurs another blunder of Thucydides. He speaks of Labdalum as "on the steepest ridge." The site is not certain, but from the mode of the attack made upon it by Gylippus, it could not have been on any ridge at all. On Dennis' map, which I have used throughout, Labdalum is placed near Epipolæ, on the Colle Buffalaro, some half a mile *below the line of the summit*, and on the land-side, looking towards Thapsus. Close beside is marked a quarry, the Latomia del Filosofo, so called afterwards from Philoxemus, imprisoned there by Dionysius. This may have provided the Athenians with stone for their walls.

Anent all these works it is difficult, standing on the spot to credit the extent of wall described by Thucydides as having been completed by the Athenians day by day. It must be remembered, however, that many of these so-called walls were often merely palisades formed of wood, mud, and stones.

Much is said about a wall called "the Circle," covering a space of ground somewhere on the table-land of Tyche, joining Epipolœ. From this "Circle" other walls descended on the seaside to Port Trogilus, near the Capuchin Convent, and on the land, or Neapolis side, to the Great Harbour by the Scala Greca.

Yet in spite of all their outworks the Athenians were driven from Epipolœ. For Gylippus, ugly Gylippus, sent by Sparta to aid the Syracusans, quickly takes the bull by the horns, builds a cross wall in no time, on Epipolœ, cutting through the Athenian works, and then, attacking Labdalum from behind, on the sea-side, takes it with all its stores, and drives the volatile, over-confident Athenians down to the Great Harbour.

Alas for the Attic Hellenes! I have said that no army ever encamped on any part of the Great Harbour without paying the penalty. (Give them time! Give them time! was the motto.)

I recall all this just as we recalled it, standing in the clear, warm air beating up from the Ionian sea, dashing in at our feet. We did not admit the Smart young man to our confidence, although most anxious to offer historical information; so he sulked all alone,

behind a shady angle of Euryalus, shooting off small pebbles at the shaggy peasants, still hanging about, offering coins, no opportunity having, as yet, presented itself of stabbing us singly on the hills, or capturing us in the dark vaults below.

"Revenons à nos moutons!" cries Physic, at length. It is time! He has been prosing about the Athenians, and the night attack by Demosthenes, with its episodes of men and horses flung down the "awful precipices" of Epipolæ, and about the tricks the moon played them, just eclipsing herself at the critical moment when they might have made good their escape!

Besides talking until he shines all over, the Doctor has led us up and down the underground galleries and passages without mercy.

We have broken our shins on the dark stairs—once ending in wooden ladders, to be instantly drawn up, if necessary; we have fingered iron horse-rings, stared at the cunning escarps and sally-ports, and traced the outer fosse, or ditch, said to extend underground to Labdalum.

Now we are standing breathless at the summit, S—— white as a sheet, Physic red as

a poppy, and I who write, with no legs at all to stand upon.

"Revenons à nos moutons!" repeats the Doctor; the "mouton" in question being Dionysius the Elder, a great favourite with the Doctor, and much connected with Epipolæ; no sheep, indeed, but a sort of human tiger—beginning as a common soldier, developing into a poet, musician, and general, and ending as a tyrant and butcher.

"Why," continues Physic, testily, addressing himself to me, who am far too cautious to commit myself, "Why do you keep on so about these Athenians? There is so much else more interesting to talk about. Besides, neither Euryalus nor the walls were built in their day, nor for more than two centuries after."

I do not answer. I had said nothing at all about the Athenians; but it would only vex him to contradict him. And who would willingly vex the Doctor? His very foibles are virtues. He is so eager to impart his great historical knowledge, that he is a little overbearing—that is all.

Dionysius learned a lesson from the Athenian siege. Outer Syracuse could not be properly defended by sea or land without walls of circumvallation, and there was little except

that old sea-wall from Santa Panagia, at the point of Achradina to the Great Harbour.

Dionysius has a long account to settle with Himilcon, for he remembers Leptines and the great defeat off Catania. Besides, he knows he must fight for life and sovereignty, for the strongest walls at Agrigentum had not saved the inhabitants from the ferocity of Himilcon, and now he is marching on Syracuse. Epipolæ must have walls, but not as other cities; Dionysius' Walls must rise like magic.

The stone was quarried from the Latomiæ; the Latomia del Filosofo, near the Colle Buffalàro, giving materials for the further or eastern end, towards Euryalus, and the other Latomia furnishing the rest.

The Athenian walls, and those cross-walls of Gylippus in connection with Labdalum, would appear to have been more inland. These are nowhere mentioned.

Seventy thousand freedmen worked above-ground, and tens upon tens of thousands of ruder hands toiled underneath, to cut and prepare the stone. There were six thousand yoke of oxen to cart it to and fro.

You can still plainly see the line of Dionysius' Wall, following on along the table-land of Epipolæ—a line of loose blocks of stone, some-

times almost obliterated, sometimes varying from two to three feet in height.

And here again the question arises, whether these walls were wholly of stone? We know that Dionysius sent armies of workmen to fell timber on Etna. Was this in part for his walls as well as for his navy?

In twenty days the wall was finished. It was thirty stadia long—(over three modern miles)—solidly built and strong; no signs of haste in it, of a suitable height, nine feet across, and guarded with frequent towers of defence; all of uncemented stone, carefully jointed.

For these twenty days Dionysius stood on this breezy platform urging on the workers. He promised, he gave, and still he urged with mad impatience. Old Diodorus says he even laboured with his own hands. Wonderful walls these to read about, and yet how useless! A complete and comprehensive line of circumvallation, such as modern defence requires, was almost unknown to the ancients. Dionysius committed the same mistake as the Athenians, and Himilcon entered Outer Syracuse.

Who built the walls on the southern cliff of Achradina? Achradina had walls before the time of Dionysius. They are still to be traced in fragments roughly tossed about at

the back of the Church of San Giovanni, mixed up with orchards and fruit-grounds, on to the site of the ancient sea-gate and little cove called Buon Servizio (from the "good service" Archimedes did his country on that spot).

We know from Plutarch on Marcellus, that Achradina was enclosed by a separate wall.

Many ancient walls intersect Epipolæ. The one still well marked along the summit, passing the ruins of the Hexapylum and Scala Greca, and breaking off at the Torre di Galeaga, is clearly Dionysius' work. Another—(a short one, for the sea is so close)—descends from the Castle of Euryalus to the beach; its course marked by bee-orchis and moon-daisies, with here and there a wind-tossed olive-tree.

Over the farm of Tarcia are also remains of ancient defences. Some hold Tarcia on the slope of Epipolæ seawards, over Thapsus, as the site of Fort Labdalum; but Labdalum, wherever it was, was not where it ought to have been, viz., upon a height.

To Hiero II., and his friend Archimedes, falls the credit of selecting Euryalus as the strategic key of Syracuse, and of specially fortifying the escarped ridge of Epipolæ that Nature had made so strong. Only starvation or treachery could force that lock.

CHAPTER VII.

The Two Plains.—The Doctor on his "Hobby-horse."—The Hexapylum and Torre di Galeaga.—Archimedes the Necromancer.—Marcellus taking Notes.—The Romans in Syracuse.—Tears of the Victor.—The Suppliant City.

EFORE long the Doctor insists on our climbing the lesser fort of Euryalus to see the view. S—— objects as an invalid, on principle, to all exertion. So I am the victim. Poising myself on Physic's arm, and Physic poising himself on his stick, we hold on to tottering stones with trembling feet.

What long, low, desolate lines! What a vast saddened plain! Plain, west, towards Lentini and Catania; plain, north, towards Enna, in the centre of the island; plain, south, towards Ragusa and Noto; nothing but plain!

Not a fertile vega, dark with mandarin and citron groves, and broken by palms and magnolias, as at Palermo, but ashen, bare, desolate!

Oh! for a dash of red, purple, or orange, on the mountain-side! A tawny sunset over ilex woods! or that pure coral tinge which mantles the northern peaks when the sun sets!

And the sea!

Just under Epipolœ there is another plain, boundless as the land; only this one glitters in azure and opaline, fading lines and broad circles breaking its surface.

The sparkle and gaiety of this second plain, with its harmonious ripple and fresh-breathing airs, shadowed by great cirrhus clouds that come riding up from the south, make the monotony of the land all the more solemn.

On land there are no trees, no houses, except the little heaped-up island-mound in Ortygia far away. There are rocks, ruins, and stones, and the dead, lone look of what was once a great city, trodden out by war and conquest!

But for its history, who would come to Syracuse?

The sun is setting in pale saffron tints over that wide channel, across which the Carthaginians came for so many centuries, Himilcon, Hannibal, Hamilcar, and afterwards Saracen Emirs, and Kaliffs, in fleets of galleys and

triremes, their black painted sides outlined in gold and purple; the African captain at the poop, the dusky rowers rising and falling to the banks of oars, the dusky sails set for victory!

A bright sun-ray strikes on a modern land-mark, the telegraph on Belvidere, so discrepant in these pale solitudes, and leads the eye on to Hybla's long line of lofty headlands.

The Great Harbour lies at our feet, bounded by Plemmyrium, and the Olympeium, standing aside, sombre, as with a curse. The Lesser Harbour borders what was once Achradina, and the Village Green and the Forum are below!

Dr. P——, map in hand, firmly established on a block of stone on the wall of the little fort of Euryalus—I am seated beside him—is fairly off on his historic hobby-horse.

The gods have not made the Doctor analytical and romantic, like S——, facts are his mania. "Now, why keep on about those Athenians," he is saying (it is no use to argue the point, I let it pass). "I find the Roman siege of Syracuse much more interesting. From here you can see it all. With the Romans you have all the excitement of a double siege, Romans besieging Syracusans, and Carthaginians besieging Romans.

"That Hamilcar had the pluck of the devil, and Bomilcar, though a traitor, was a very able sailor.

"And Marcellus! What a fine fellow! Those tears of his over Syracuse do him infinite honour. Any brute of a soldier can be cruel. To be merciful in those days showed character."

"Where is S——?" Physic breaks off to ask.

"I cannot tell," I answer, taking a look round.

"Poor chap! Poor chap!" says the Doctor; "it is mind, not body with him. Grief is ruining his health. Now, if he would only let me prescribe for him!"

A momentary gleam from the setting sun again breaks his line of thought.

"Ah yes! Short days, Short days; we must be moving. Marcellus' camp was down there on the shore; you see the place under the hill?"

"Yes," I reply.

"For a long time he could not get within shot of Syracuse. His Romans, who had faced Gauls and Carthaginians gallantly, were fairly posed by the necromancies of Archimedes. He had fortified all the line of Epipolæ, and

utilized Dionysius' Wall with its towers running down towards the shore at Tyche and Achradina. You see it yonder"—pointing with the inevitable stick—"in and out on that plateau. If the stones were not so much the same colour as the rock, one could trace it much better."

Then the Doctor turns landward.

"You can distinguish the line along that road to Florida and Lentini, running like a white ribbon across the plain. Thank God! bad as the rail is, it is better than a Sicilian road any day. You see it?"

"Yes."

"The Hexapylum, a six-gated tower, commanded the road inland; at the Scala Greca, doubtless, for the ground sinks, as if there had been a road there.

"Further on is the Torre di Galeaga, nearer Achradina and the sea.

"Now, when all these great towers, castles, and forts set their machines and pulleys going, you may fancy the roar!

"Towards the shore there were machines which struck the Roman galleys with such force, that at one blow they yawned open and parted in two; tackles and chains which lifted vessels bodily into the air, whirled them round, and then plunged them into the sea. As for Mar-

cellus' poor little war-machine, called *Sambuca*, which he carried with him on eight galleys, of which he was so proud, Archimedes just struck it with a stone or two, and shattered it to bits.

"This caused Marcellus to reflect.

"'Close under the walls,' he reasoned, 'the war-engines cannot hurt us; they require a wider range.' So daybreak finds the Romans crowding close under the walls. By Jupiter! they soon found out their mistake. Archimedes was not caught napping. He had short as well as long beams to his engines. He had even had apertures made in the walls for 'scorpions'—that did not carry far, and could be readily discharged. So the Romans, close under the walls, are saluted with a shower of darts and stones, which crack their skulls as they retire discomfited; while other engines are made to play upon them at other distances; fresh ranges varied to the distance—graduating every step they take with a new aim.

"Then there were his lenses.

"At the little cove of Buon Servizio, Archimedes is supposed to have planted those wonderful reflectors which set the Roman galleys in a blaze.

"'What is the use of trying?' cries Marcellus, laughing heartily, as he sees his engineers and artillerymen flying, and his ships burning on the sea.

"But Marcellus found a way, after all.

"Torre Galeaga is marked here, on Mr. Dennis' map, as just below the little Bay of Trogilus, near Sta. Panagia, beyond that roof down there, by the tuft of olive-trees. You may find plenty of stones and ruins there, as elsewhere; and I daresay that conceited scoundrel, the 'Smart young man,' as you call him, would swear to the site and the measurement, besides showing you the mortar and the materials, though no one knows precisely if that is the spot. Well, it was at Torre Galeaga, where he had occasion to hold a parley with the Syracusan leader Epicydes, that Marcellus cut the Gordian knot of the siege of Syracuse.

"Standing under the wall, and biting his nails at the long harangue to which he was forced to listen, Marcellus, to pass away the time, fell to counting the string-courses of stone from the top to the bottom, and thence to measuring the height with his eye. This particular wall, he saw, was lower than the others, and but slightly guarded in comparison; the

ascent, also, that led to it was easy to scale, counting by the courses of stone.

"Now, George Dennis, who, I agree with you, knows more than any living man about Syracuse, states that you may see the ancient foundations close to the road to Lentini and Catania, near that fall in the hill called the Scala Greca, near an ancient gateway.

"For that I cannot answer.

"Marcellus was set thinking. An assault was impossible; but a surprise . . . . ? Two scaling-ladders, for instance, measured to the height of the string-courses, and a dozen Romans, not scared by war-engines and catapults . . . ?

"Anyway, it is worth trying."

"But," say I, "that story of the wall is told of a Roman soldier."

"Right, my dear friend; Livy says so; but I prefer Plutarch, who, however inaccurate about places, is wonderfully minute about individuals.

"'The great festival of Diana,' Livy says, 'falling out at that time, was a good opportunity. The country people, shepherds and peasants, flocked into Syracuse with fruit and flowers, dancing and singing before the altars of the gods; and the citizens, exultant over

the three years the Romans had been kept waiting, joined in the fun. Diana, as you know, is the protectress of Syracuse, and the Syracusan wines are too good not to be drunk plentifully at festivals, even of virgin goddesses. So freely did the Syracusans drink, that for two days they lay about the streets like pigs.

"'On the morning of the third, they were awoke by the blowing of the Roman trumpets and the whistle of the fifes. Marcellus was inside the tower, and had filled the great six-gated Hexapylum with Roman troops.

"'There was no doubt about it. As the sun rose over Epipolæ, all the Roman war-music was sounding at once—drums beating, pæans singing, and Roman short swords and Roman helmets flashing on the ramparts. Epicydes might seek at first to rally the fugitives he met, telling them only to have courage, and he would soon drive out the small band of Romans, who must have got within the walls by accident. Accident indeed! It was all in vain. Syracuse was taken!

"'Now it was that, looking down over the great and magnificent city lying at his feet'—as its white ruins are lying before us—'Marcellus shed those tears so greatly to his credit.

"'He thought upon the Athenian fleet sunk

in the Great Harbour; of two vast armies cut off by carnage; of the miserable deaths of the Generals, Nicias, Lamachus, and Demosthenes; of the repeated invasions of Carthage, so gallantly repulsed by Syracuse; of the great men who had dwelt there—Hiero I., Dionysius, Agathocles, Dion, and Timoleon, and especially Hiero II., that staunch Roman ally, who bequeathed Rome's alliance to his grandson; how they had all beautified the city, and loved it, and dwelt in it;—and so his soul melted.'

"The speech made to him by the Syracusans is very fine. Do you remember it? The sense of it is this:—

"'Neither we nor the other citizens have been in any way at fault, oh Marcellus, in going to war with Rome. It is Hieronymus, a wicked tyrant, our ruler—young in years but old in crime—who has ruined us by allying himself with Carthage; also Hippocrates and Epicydes, his generals and instruments, who did likewise. We Syracusans are innocent.

"'Marcellus! the gods have given you the glory of taking the most renowned and most beautiful of all the Grecian capitals! Whatever we have done memorable, by land and sea, will go to swell your triumph! Let it not be said that you have ruined so powerful a

city, but rather that you left it entire, as a monument of your greatness.

"'Alas! Let not the memory of Hieronymus weigh more with you than the memory of Hiero! Hiero was much longer Rome's friend than Hieronymus was her enemy. Yours be it, Marcellus, to reconcile the two—to transmit Syracuse unimpaired to your family, as *your* glory, and the glory of your descendants, the race of the Marcelli!'"

"Do you think I know nothing of all this?" I say, rather nettled at Physic's complete appropriation of all history.

"I do not know if you do, or not; nor do I care," replies Physic, looking me full in the face, in his quaint way, his eyes just moistened by a tear; "I know I read it up last night for your benefit." Then he rises, and stands a moment, supporting himself upon his stick. (He is a little lame, the good Doctor, though so active.) "Any way, you will know it better now," he adds.

"If I have amused you, so much the better. I have only *recalled* these scenes to you—'*recalled*,' I say, I presume no more." Here he takes a sweeping glance round in search of S——, still on the same spot reading. At this sight the Doctor shakes his

head, while I confound myself in excuses for my petulance. "Yes," he continues, with another look round, this time rather irritated, "and as I would have done for S——, too, had he condescended to listen. I take it very much amiss that S—— should prefer that mawkish *In Memoriam*, to my conversation. Why, there is more real life-drama in one Greek siege than in all Tennyson put together! And now the sun is gone down. So, call up the carabineers, Mrs. E——, in your choice Italian, and let us get back to dinner."

CHAPTER VIII.

A Day in Syracuse.—Santa Lucia taking the Air.—Grecian Theatre.—Two Queens.—Hiero-Ætneas.—Æschylus and Pindar.—"Earth and Sea, A Comedy."—Phormis.—The Golden Youth.—Dionysius at the Play.—Anecdotes.—The "Younger" after Dinner.—An Ancient Farce.—Timoleon and the Statues.—The Theatre and Every-day Life.

I HAVE had a wonderful day in Outer Syracuse. The Grecian Theatre and the Street of Tombs, San Giovanni and the Catacombs, the Latomiæ, St. Paul, and the Athenians, are all simmering in my brain. I hope something clear and definite will come out of the whirl; only, if I am very long and very misty, put it down to the way in which I have been see-sawed to-day, over all history, Grecian, Sacred, Roman, and Phenician.

In the morning I began by Santa Lucia. I knew nothing about her, except that she usually carries her eyes in a plate; but, before

reaching the drawbridge, I found out a great deal. My rickety little fiacre could not pass for the crowd. Now, as a crowd of any sort, except beggars, is very unusual at Syracuse, I at once inquired the cause.

"It was the festival of Santa Lucia, and the procession would pass *subito* (immediately)," I was informed by many voices; and many pair of dark inquisitive eyes were turned upon me, the *forestiera*, in wonder at my ignorance. As it was burning hot, I drew up in a shady corner under the Spanish walls to see the show. I was just in time.

Santa Lucia, born in Syracuse in A.D. 304, of Christian parents, and who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian, takes in all respects, as a virgin saint, the place of the virgin goddess, Diana, in Ortygia.

Wherever there were Hellenic colonies, there was a divine female influence. This influence passed from the elegant Greeks to their unlettered conquerors the Romans, and from the Romans to the early Christians established among them; only, instead of the purely pagan notion of simple physical beauty, intellect came to be added.

Santa Lucia usually resides in an ugly side-chapel in Minerva's temple, now the

Cathedral. Twice a year she is taken out for an airing, to visit her country seat in Achradina (one of those abominable Norman-faced churches I find so unsympathetic in Grecian Syracuse.) After a stay of three or four days she then returns to her side-chapel in the city.

All the town assembles to escort her to and fro. Every one who has a carriage sits in it; but fiacres, painted carts, and even donkeys are not disdained by the accommodating saint, knowing the poverty of her Syracusan worshippers.

A tremendous crowd on foot, serious and intent, fills the open space where I have drawn up under the walls. Salvoes of artillery and the clang of drums and trumpets announce the Saint's approach. Long before she is visible, every soul is kneeling.

As for Saint Agatha at Catania all the troops in the garrison head the procession; the General, wearing his orders, seated on a carracoling charger; the Prefect, a pleasant-looking gentleman, (whom I have, as yet, happily avoided,) in his uniform, (I really do admire their seriousness,) then the Bishop, mitre on head, in blazing vestments, followed by the whole Cathedral body, down to the little acolytes in red, swinging censers.

A sort of master of the ceremonies, in black, bearing a wand of office, marshals them along, and keeps off the crowd, ready to precipitate itself forward, as if before the car of Juggernaut!

Then, last of all, appears a platform, or car, harnessed by men, two and two, on which sits the saint, a huge dusky idol, larger than life, very pagan and barocco. Her flaxen head, thrown back, glitters with many crowns; her neck is a mass of jewels; her outstretched arms grandly appealing; her flowing robes, like burnished gold in the fierce sunshine, falling in great folds over the edge of the platform. (To kiss this robe is beatitude, accorded to few.) Altogether, a very imposing saint, with a fixed vitality in her painted eyes uncomfortable to scoffers.

Now through the mass of her worshippers she passes—slowly, solemnly, dispensing, as it seems, silent blessings with those outstretched arms — until she fades into the shadow of Charles V.'s lofty portcullis. The carriages, carts, and donkeys follow; the military music grows fainter and fainter on the breeze; the piazza gradually empties, and Syracuse resumes its usual aspect of desolate weediness.

The Grecian Theatre lying on the hillside of New Town, or Neapolis, about half a mile from

Syracuse, is a graceful and gracious monument, smiling to the island city, the azure heaven, and the glittering sea.

How useless to describe a ruin! Yet what remains is so grand, the curved lines so harmonious, the symmetry so perfect, that it fills me with artistic joy.

Thank Heaven! we need not burrow underground, or go to Cicero or Pausanius to be told about it. There it is before us! The shape a semicircle; the seats like descending rays collected in front of the proscenium; the colour a delicately warm tint, responsive to the sun.

That it is built of limestone, and not of marble, must not lessen it in artistic estimation. Marble is not plentiful in Sicily as in Greece, and the native stone could be worked with great delicacy, and brought up to a brilliant surface, by a fine coat of stucco.

I can count forty-two successive rows of seats in good preservation. Towards the top there are more, but less perfect—room enough to accommodate twenty-four thousand spectators; the fascia, carved in the rock, bearing the names of the different divisions (*cunei*) into which these seats were classed.

Here I can read titles of that day—five hundred years before Christ—the architect

assuming that all the world knew them well, without index or glossary.

But alas! after the supreme name of Jupiter Olympus on one *cuneus* supposed to mark the seat of the priests, and that of Hiero on another (Hiero naturally glorified as the founder), we come upon two queens, Philistis and Nereis (the Eugénie and Victoria, as one may say, of that day), of whom, in spite of the confidence of the architect flinging them at us, as it were, from afar, certain to hit—we know nothing.

Dennis, the solver of all Sicilian mysteries, opines that one of them, Nereis (shutting up in herself, one feels, a perfect chronicle of the scandal of the day), was a daughter of Pyrrhus the Epirote, married to Gelon, son of Hiero II., and thus grandmother to Hieronymus.

About Queen Philistis, whose name is graven on the *cuneus* next to that of Nereis, even Dennis himself knows nothing, except as a beautiful head upon a silver coin, called after her "Philistia." "Possibly," he says, "she may have been married to Hiero II., a sort of Dorian Bluebeard, with so many wives that history refuses to chronicle them."

The streamlet from the Nymphæum, which has done its best to obliterate these ancient

names, is in full force now, and gurgles beautifully to the ear, as I stand overlooking the graceful curve of the theatre, before it joins the "Brook of the Washerwomen" below.

Fronting the ranges of seats are two square hewn rocks, the foundations of the stage, or scena, and a pit for the curtain, or siparium, to rise from; the whole theatre, rugged indeed, and chaotic in detail, but as distinct in its principal lines as if built but yesterday.

A great king was the architect—Hiero I. (Ætneas, as he loved to be called), brother of Gelon. (The architect, Democopus, only finished what Hiero had begun.)

A very refined and artistic tyrant, Hiero, and witty and popular withal, but a tyrant all the same, wrathful and suspicious, with countless spies in that elegant and literary court of his, "the very harvest-field," as Pindar calls it, "of the ripened ears of all that is excellent."

Look at him! He is entering the royal door, which bears no name upon it, seeing that Syracuse, like Rome, is a nominal Republic—a tall, grandly-proportioned man, resembling his great brother Gelon,—attired in the short tunic of a warrior, and wearing a regal cir[illegible] among his curling locks.

Æschylus and Pindar are with him;

behind walk the inferior poets, Simonides, Bacchylides, and Epicharmus.

Æschylus has lately come from Athens to live at Hiero's hospitable board; disgusted, as it would seem, by the success of inferior poets, and the coolness with which the Athenian public received his "Eumenides," because, forsooth, ladies in an interesting condition declared, "they were alarmed at the chorus of the Furies."

Others said Æschylus left Athens because he had dared to allude to some detail of the Eleusian Mysteries. Now, both these were capital offences, as causing a lack of births and a failure in the harvests.

Here he has no reason to complain. His famous play of "The Ætnaiai" has so charmed the Syracusan audience, that it has been followed by another, "The Persians."

We know how much these colonial Hellenes delighted in dramatic poetry, from their treatment of the Athenian captives. Such of them as could sing or recite Euripides were liberated from the Latomiæ and well treated; the rest were left to die!

Pindar also has hailed Hiero as Ætneas. He is always writing odes to him. That one celebrating his victory with colts, beginning,

"Oh, mighty-seated Syracuse! precinct of war-plumed Ares, breeder of men and horses," is the most popular, because it is the most easy to understand.

At this moment, Pindar, somewhat jealous of the attention Hiero pays to Æschylus, leans over to inquire "In what measure it will please him to have his recent victory with a single-horse chariot at the Pythian Games recorded? Whether he shall associate the name of his brother Gelon with his own, or celebrate him and his horse Pheremicus alone?" At last, a happy idea strikes him: Diana in Ortygia shall hold the reins, while Hiero only *seems* to drive the chariot.

While this is discussing, Epicharmus, who finds it dull, turns round to take note of a line of skin-coated Siculi, sitting, with open mouths, upon a distant bench.

Then silence is proclaimed; the curtain rises; and the actors, shouting through echoing masks, claim attention for a poem of Catanian Stesichoros, following upon a versified fable of Empedocles.

There are not always actors at Syracuse equal to filling the parts of the great plays of Æschylus or Euripides. You must go to Athens for that. But, as the Greeks love new

things, a constant change of performance is provided.

So Epicharmus, who knows this, writes such light pieces as "Earth and Sea," a gastronomic farce, showing off the Syracusan love of good living (we are always hearing of Dorian gluttony) a favourite travesty; also the "Syrens," who, instead of singing melodies to Odysseus, according to him, treat the navigator to a succulent supper of fish and birds, which take up a dialogue on the gridiron and the spit, after the fashion of Dr. Kitchener's "Bubble and Squeak."

Dafnis, like Epicharmus, has hit on a new thing—Pastorals in dialogue, "Eclogues," as they are called: the idea taken from the rustic part songs and choruses sung to Diana by the shepherds coming into town for her festival; just as the Abruzzi shepherds, in our day, come into Rome to sing *Novenas* to the Virgin in the streets.

Phormis, general and dramatist, is also a very amusing fellow, sharing with Epicharmus the distinction of having substituted comedy for fable, though unfortunately nothing but the titles of his plays remain. Phormis has lately insisted on dressing the actors in long robes and showy draperies, and hanging

the proscenium with purple stuffs, and gilt leather, alterations in accordance with the gorgeous tastes of Hiero, and much approved by the audience.

In the pauses between the acts, the "Golden Youths," flower-wreathed and scented, wearing embroidered chlamyds, broad coloured fillets bound in their perfumed locks, mount to the upper galleries to drink a bowl of wine and breathe pure breezes from the sea, passing over ranges of orange and jessamine gardens.

Others cool themselves in the freshness of the Nymphæum, just above.

What a glorious view opens before them! Island, city, and distant plain, the dark strand of Achradina kissing the Ionian Sea, and that calm expanse of the Great Harbour glittering with gaudy triremes and galleys!

Within the Nymphæum are grouped the slaves and painted Phrynes of the day, a band of Hetairæ scantily clothed, and curled and painted, as the Greek youths love, singing to harps and lyres, or lolling on couches of rose-leaves, beside that self-same streamlet which *still* gushes out abundantly from the white rock.

Again the trumpet gives the signal that the curtain is rising, and all hurry back to take their seats.

Later on, Dionysius the Elder crosses over from Ortygia to the theatre, and sits upon the royal seat when Hiero is dead.

Dionysius wears armour under his royal vestments, and his beard is burnt, not shaved, for fear of razors!

With him are his two young wives, Doris and Aristomache, married on the same day.

How Dionysius ventures to the theatre at all is a marvel, but he is mad about poetry, and finds time to write verses himself.

When his new piece, the "Bacchanals," which he had sent to be represented at Athens, met with some success, it caused him such transports of joy that he is popularly said to have died of it. He was not always, however, so successful.

Plutarch tells of the embassy of singers, musicians, and reciters, with gilded chariots and prancing steeds, bearing tents of richest stuffs and jewels of gold, which Dionysius sent to the games of Olympia, as an escort to his verses; and how the chariots were broken, the tents pillaged and spoiled, and, worse than all, his verses hissed, and he, himself, sneered at as a sorry fellow and a tyrant, by the orator Lycias; and how he tried a second time and was again hissed by those critical Greeks, who

if they had many faults, possessed, at least, the merit of artistic consciences.

Also, how Dionysius imprisoned his best friend, Philoxeus, in a Latomia for daring to criticise his poetry; and that when he called him back to liberate him, Philoxeus, firm to his standard, cried out—

"Send me back to prison, Dionysius; kill me if you like, but ask me not to change my opinion. The verses are bad, and I will not praise them."

A many-sided man is Dionysius, his "funny" side coming uppermost in more anecdotes than of almost any other Greek.

It was Dionysius who, like Haroun-al-Raschid, placed a common man, Damocles, on his throne for a day, and hung that famous sword over his head to frighten him.

It was Dionysius who pardoned the old woman who prayed the gods loudly as he passed along the street, "to spare his life, for fear his successors should be more wicked than himself." It was Dionysius who permitted his brother-in-law, Dion, to rebuke him for calling Gelon a "laughing-stock," and who could appreciate the devotion of Damon and Pythias, even if he could not tolerate the advice of Plato.

A silent terror-stricken court takes its place

at the theatre around Dionysius, opposite the stage.

The play is a severe tragedy, the "Agamemnon." Nothing lewd or gross is patronized in this reign. The manners of the Tyrant are bland in public towards the people he tramples on; his habits frugal, like a soldier as he is; his vices private.

The drunkenness and rough ways of his son, the "Younger," and his hideous revellings, came later.

After all, the Elder was a "soldier before everything," spite of his flirtation with the Muses, and a caustic wit.

The real lover of the drama is his son, as true a Bohemian as ever flourished in the *Quartier Latin.*

A young man who takes his wine as lovingly as mother's milk, is drunk for ninety days together, lives to a good old age, writes in comedy, and teaches, to fill an empty purse, has claims in this respect.

The "Younger," who has dined and already drunk many cups of Muscata, down at the splendid palace of his father in Ortygia, comes up in his chariot, by the long broad street to the theatre, to enjoy himself, and make a row.

Tottering towards the royal bench, he is supported by a fair-haired boy, dressed as Ganymede, who bears a golden amphora.

On one side sits his "Sister-queen," the meek Sophrosyne; on the other Plato, who has ventured back again to Syracuse to teach the "Younger" virtue; beyond frowns iron-faced Dion

Now Dionysius, lolling back on his silken cushions, is flinging roses with one hand at the Hetairæ who have collected near him, laughing a deep guttural laugh. With his other he is clutching stern Dion by the mantle, and grinning in his face.

Is this the fruit of Plato's lessons?

As for the courtiers, they are so obliging, that not only are they all drunk like the king, but, like him, they are all near-sighted. Since Dionysius suffers from his eyes, no man about the Court can see beyond a stone's throw.

At last there is a hush, the king is quieted, and the curtain rises for a light piece of mythological buffoonery, called "The Marriage of Hebe."

Behold the whole circle of Olympus engaged in a debauch! Jupiter licks fried fish off the plate like a dog; Juno consumes a bundle of lettuces, in honour of her child; Minerva

plays the flute; Apollo dances a jig; the Nine Muses figure as nine poisonous rivers; while the nuptial rites of Hercules and Hebe are celebrated with every detail, in public.

How the king roars and claps his hands, as Bacchus treads the wine-press, Neptune serves the table, and Hebe plays the prude. And, how the sound is taken up and runs from bench to bench!

The very actors—old men and youths—laugh too, under their masks; and, look, even Plato smiles!

Then kings at the theatre go out of date.

Instead, we have Timoleon the "Deliverer." A law-giver, and a soldier—very practical and republican, with no elegant tastes at all, wearing the severe and awful visage of a man, who, like Rhadamanthus, judges quick and dead.

Stern Timoleon turns the graceful theatre into a law-court, where not only civil and criminal causes are heard, but all the defunct tyrants of Syracuse, represented by their marble effigies in the Inner and Outer Cities, are brought up and judged like living men.

Gelon's statue is alone judged worthy to remain on its pedestal, and comes to be placed within the Temple of Hera.

Not only effigies of tyrants, but tyrants themselves are judged.

Mamercus, for instance, tyrant of Catania, Timoleon's friend, at his first landing from Corinth, then his foe — because Mamercus allied himself with Carthage — is tried and sentenced to suffer the punishment of thieves and robbers.

Besides condemning tyrants and their effigies, Timoleon condemns the monuments which they raised. The palaces of Dionysius and Hiero in Ortygia, the fortress of the Pentapyle, the historic sun-dial, are all demolished as "*bulwarks of tyranny.*"

It is lucky that Timoleon leaves the theatre untouched. But there is a certain respect for the multitude in "Deliverers," as in "Tyrants."

Everyone, old and young, rich and poor, bondsmen and free, goes to the theatre. Not only does the critical Greek hear the voice of the elder poets sounding the deeper notes of human passion, in such stories as the Pelopidæ, and Œdipus; but it is his forum, domus, debating-club, lecture-room, rostrum, audience-chamber, and exchange.

At the theatre politicians discuss state secrets in the upper galleries, or near the Podium, where no listeners can lurk, courtiers

plot assassinations, and generals plan possible expeditions against Messana or Acragas.

As for poets who like to muse, or lovers to bill and coo in solitude, close at hand, level with the Nymphæum, there is the Street of Tombs. Here, if so minded, they can stroll among the ashes of their ancestors, lying within the square loculi, or wander beyond, upon the breezy platform, towards Apollo's colossal statue and the sacred groves.

CHAPTER IX.

The Street of Tombs.—Archimedes' Grave.—Cicero's Relation. —A Misnomer.

I AM now within the vaulted recess of the Nymphæum, over the Theatre, a cool retreat, hewn in the solid rock, festooned with feathering lady-ferns, yellow oxalis, and purple caper-flowers.

The circular seat is worn and splintered; an ancient water-course splashes down, without form or order, from broken apertures of Grecian architecture, moistening the stones; and little gusts of air come swirling down to greet me.

Close by, the dark rocks yawn apart, a heavy shadow falls, and a narrow passage opens.

This is the Street of Tombs, winding upward to the plateau of Temenitis and Tyche.

For a distance of two hundred yards the rock is honeycombed with the dark mouths of open sepulchres running back horizontally into

the earth's depths—a dark and solemn Golgotha, rifled of bones!

To make all more real this sepulchral highway is marked and wrinkled with the ruts and roughnesses worn by the wheels of Grecian cars and chariots.

What far-off ghosts sat in these? What footsteps pressed these stones?

Cicero, followed by his Roman proctors, seeking for the tomb of Archimedes; Scipio Africanus, fresh from the conquest of Carthage, bringing back the precious statues stolen by those irrepressible robbers; Agathocles coming from the Sea Gate with his African veterans; Icetas, to attack the citadel; naked athletes, on prancing horses; heavily-draped Syracusan maidens bearing water-jars; the priests of Demeter, carrying corn-sheaves and oil-jars, and driving before them cattle for sacrifice; Flora's servants, laden with wreaths and flower-baskets for her altar; Apollo's Hierophants, with music of harps and songs; the sacred cow of Hera, led by golden reins; or rude idols of sun-dried clay—mere emblems of divinity, offered by peasants, to hang up on Pan's rustic altar?

That this Street of Tombs opens so close upon the Grecian Theatre, is not by any way

of contrast. The Greeks knew nothing of sentimental philosophy, and hated mournful images and the idea of death. The position only indicates its great antiquity.

Here we are brought face to face with a period when Syracuse was but the Island of Ortygia, and the walled suburb of Achradina.

The Street of Tombs, leading probably to the Necropolis Himilcon robbed, near to the Temples of Ceres and Proserpine, was then outside the city, in the open country towards Epipolœ. Later, when Neapolis and Tyche grew into rich and flourishing quarters, the Street of Tombs came within the circuit of the walls, close to the spot on the hillside chosen by Hiero as most appropriate for his theatre.

A little onward, up the hill, the "Smart young man"—whom I have brought for protection, not for company—shows me what he calls "the Tombs of Archimedes and Timoleon." (It is lucky Physic is gone out yachting!)

Archimedes, when dying by the hand of that ignorant Roman soldier, charged his friends to mark his tomb with a sphere and a cylinder. He also dictated his epitaph. A hundred and thirty-seven years later, not only the tomb, but its very existence, was forgotten. Cicero, then

Roman Quæstor at Syracuse, sought for it, and found it with the greatest difficulty, near the Agragian Gate, in Achradina.

These are Tullius Cicero's own words :—

"I discovered the burying-place of Archimedes—quite unknown to, and even denied by the Syracusans—by certain verses which I heard were inscribed on it; and also because I knew that on the top there were placed a sphere and a cylinder. For, as I was scanning all the sepulchres (further, there is a great abundance of them at the Agragian Gate), I remarked a small column rising but slightly above thickets and brambles, bearing the figure of a sphere and cylinder. Turning immediately to the Syracusans who accompanied me, I exclaimed, 'This is the monument I am seeking.' So I sent persons in with knives and sickles to clear the trees and open a way. As soon as this was done, we went in, and there, on the further side of the pedestal, appeared the inscription I was looking for, with half the verses eaten away"—

> "So Tully paused—amid the wrecks of time—
> On the rude stone, to trace the truth sublime,
> Where, at his feet, in honoured dust disclosed,
> The immortal Sage of Syracuse reposed."

What the "Smart young man" calls the

"Tomb of Archimedes," is a small square sepulchral chamber, hollowed in the rock, with a recess opposite the entrance, for a body, and some sepulchral niches in the side-walls. The stranger could scarcely pass it by unnoticed among the barren rocks over which he is led along the high ground above the theatre, for it bears a rudely-carved Doric portal, low and small, with sunken pillars at the entrance. But the position by no means tallies with Cicero's description. The Agragian Gate, supposed to be close to the old Sea Gate, is to be sought for in modern Syracuse, beyond the Capuchin Convent, among the cliffs at the headland of Santa Panagia.

The so-called "Tomb of Timoleon," rather higher up on the rocky surface on the Tyche platform, upon which I am standing, is very similar to the other in form; only not in such good preservation. Both are heavy, graceless monuments, much more Roman in style than Grecian.

The names are purely arbitrary. Timoleon was buried, as I have said, on the site of the Roman Forum, where his famous statue stood, as the "Deliverer." (It was afterwards removed into the Temple of Juno.)

The Timoleonteium, with lofty pillars and

porticoes, bright gardens and flowery groves, in which stood Palestra, where games were held in his honour, was his mausoleum.

All about here the rocks mould themselves into the semblance of tombs and mortuary chambers; but of whom, who can say?

More congenial with the neighbouring theatre was the colossal statue of Apollo, rising from sacred woods of laurel, cypress, and elm, on the rocky ridge looking towards Ortygia and the sea. The temples of Ceres and Proserpine were near, but the exact site has never been determined.

CHAPTER X.

A Delicate Attention.—An Enchanted Region.—A Greek Quarry.—"Dionysius' Ear."—The Ara.—The Roman Amphitheatre.—Greek and Roman Architecture.

UP to this moment I was not conscious that the delicate attention of the Prefect, had bestowed upon me the escort of two carabineers.

I suddenly became aware of the fact, by the glitter of military accoutrements, near the Nymphæum, hanging about the door of a little mill, worked by the same classic stream of the broken aqueduct which flows through the theatre.

(All that I have described lies so near together on the hill-side at New Town, one might almost throw a pocket-handkerchief from one point to the other.)

Yes! there they are, two carabineers smiling at me benignantly, in cocked hats and well-brushed uniforms, and along with them a

half-naked miller, smiling too, cap in hand, as he leans against his own door-post; a group so suggestive of the Opera Comique that had they broken out into song, I should not have been the least astonished.

Instead, however, of serenading me with an *aria d'entrata*, or joining in a chorus—the handsomest of the two carabineers, a corporal named Giuliano, and a bachelor, as he takes care afterwards to inform me, having been evidently instructed beforehand, to make himself useful, stands forth, and, with a military salute, opens a wicket-gate, leading down a narrow pathway, bordered by orange-trees, or rather by oranges, so thickly does the fruit hang upon the boughs, to make my first acquaintance with a Grecian Latomia.

I presume that all well-educated persons know that a Latomia is a quarry on a hill-side, worked down to the depth of some eighty or a hundred feet. Naturally a Latomia varies with the level of the land, whence was drawn the stone to build the five great cities that made up Inner and Outer Syracuse. Slaves and prisoners cut the stone from the living rock, and artificers and masons formed those shafts, and blocks, and columns, destined, age after age, to increase and multiply. The whole

hill-side is dotted with the dark openings of Latomiæ. In many the mark of the chisel is yet plainly visible.

A Latomia is not only unlike any other quarry, but unlike anything else.

Neither picture, nor photograph can properly represent it; you must see it for yourself.

A solemn labyrinth of whitish yellow limestone, sympathetic to the sunshine, it winds along a narrow underground valley, as of a pre-Adamite world, its sides, sheer and perpendicular, breaking into caves, low-mouthed grottoes, and chaotic vaults.

Nowhere is the surface plain or even. When not split or wrenched asunder, it is scooped and ridged into roughnesses and crevices, marking the form of the gigantic blocks cut from it, or the capricious action of rain and storm, libeccio, and sirocco, through long centuries.

In these many-shaped crevices a whole animal life exists. Here the field-mouse and the swallow build their nests secure; the owl rests peacefully on a rocky ledge; frogs croak below in the dark holes; innumerable lizards run in and out upon the stone; and butterflies and dragon-flies, even at this late season, fly round in circles.

In this still, heavy air, thickets of flowering shrubs retain their blossoms through the entire year; euphorbia and mimosa fluttering in sweet yellow tresses, pomegranates, jessamine, myrtle, and oranges, all shooting up into unnatural height.

Great clumsy knots of cacti and aloes heave the earth asunder, and the twisting roots of fig, vine, and rose-bush, make for themselves a home, where banks of mesembryanthemum and geraniums join in, with star-like flowers.

A curtain of ivy trellises the rock into ideal lace-work, and spurge, capers, and sea-pinks peep out from the green sward above, bordering the azure sky-line.

In the deep shadows below, every plant and weed leaps into wondrous life. Although it is almost winter the moist air is that of a hot-house open to the sky, the colours, neutral and strange save where some blossom, pomegranate or hibiscus, burns into the light. The scent of flowers, especially of the yellow jessamine run up into thin trees, makes me faint with its fragrance.

Passing from essence to essence, a draught of damp air, out of some darkened cave, comes to me as a new life. All is so

strange, so exotic, I wander on in speechless wonder, silent myself, amidst subterranean silence.

Nothing is familiar. These huge, white walls shut in an enchanted region, neither earth nor heaven, while both are there resplendent.

It is well for me that I am recalled to myself by the measured cadence of Giuliano's sword clanking against his spurs. He has left his companion on guard at the wicket, along with the dusty miller.

I can see that the handsome carabineer is overwhelmed with shyness. He would not mind facing a brigand or a smuggler, but alone with a lady, a Princess, in a Latomia, is evidently a new experience.

Still in the one case, as in the other, Giuliano's sense of duty is absolute. Awful as is the lady, unfamiliar as is the spot, she must be addressed.

That he must do so has evidently been made plain to him beforehand. I can read his thoughts on his comely face, crimson with blushes. At last comes the effort. With the military salute of a finger raised to the brim of his cocked hat, and many hum's and ha's, and clearings of his throat, Giuliano produces these words—

"Excellent Princess, I have been instructed to accompany your Highness to this Latomia, called of the *Paradiso*, and to point out to you the cavern, called the Ear of Dionysius."

I long to ask Giuliano what he knows about Dionysius, and who he was, but I have not the heart to trifle with his feelings. From crimson his cheeks have passed to purple; and after he has spoken, his lips shut themselves up, as if no force could open them.

Dionysius' Ear is the strangest-shaped arch I ever beheld. Long and narrow, and ending in a sharp point, perfectly Saracenic.

If the hands that wrought it had tried, they could not have formed anything more thoroughly Moorish. The point of the arch almost reaches to the grassy margin of the rocks. High up on one side is a small square aperture like an odd-shaped door, within which Dionysius the "Elder" is supposed to have sat, and by cunningly-contrived acoustic galleries, to have collected into a chamber not only the voices of the prisoners and their words, but the very rustling of their garments, as they turned uneasily within their rocky cells.

That these Latomiæ were used as prisons is

historical. But this mysterious cave, rounded below like the lobe of an ear, and black within, is certainly nothing but the freak of some unconscious stone-cutters, who having driven their work sharply upwards too near the edge, enlarged it in this manner below to keep it from falling. A veil of ivy hangs over the mouth like a green shroud; and long ferns and grasses float from the sides.

Holm would have us believe, that upon the summit of the Latomia, Dionysius built a palace in which he concealed himself when overcome by those fits of panic-terror to which he was subject. A palace, to which the prisons underneath, cut in the solid rock, served as a foundation and from whence he could also see and hear all that passed upon the stage, in the theatre below, just as Louis XIV. enjoyed the advantage of hearing Mass said, in his antechamber, while the first prince of the blood present, passed the shirt over his naked shoulders.

Holm's idea is ingenious, but upon what it is founded I cannot say.

Further on (I am following Giuliano glancing like a human butterfly along the shady paths; having acquainted himself with the sound of his own voice, he has become a little

more communicative) is a garden of pot-herbs, and fruit-trees grown into timber.

Another chasm in the rock—deep, mystic, weird, takes the form of a pillared water-temple, where springs and rain gather into a Styx-like lake.

Within I gaze upon shadowy perspectives of halls and vaulted chambers, of dark galleries, rocky screens, and shapeless barriers. A subterranean world, as formless and terrible as Eblis.

It is twelve o'clock, and I am still in Neapolis.

A little lower is the Ara, or altar—close upon the up and down lane, by which, in a most antiquated little gig, I reached the Grecian Theatre.

The Ara is a monument of the superb ideas of Hiero II.

On this rough hill-side, so encumbered by ruins and modern walls, one might mistake it for a line of Cyclopean defence, or the fragments of a spacious temple.

In reality it is a monstrous sacrificial altar, partly cut in the native rock, partly formed of roughly-hewn stones, raised on three steps. It is 640 feet long, and 61 feet broad: a solid square of masonry, and well marked in all its circumference.

An Ara was dedicated to the terrestrial, or inferior deities—an altar to the Celestial gods. (Yet *ara* is the Greek word for both, so this would seem to be a distinction without a difference.)

An altar, with or without a temple, was used for invocations, vows, supplications and prayers. It was wreathed with fruit and flowers, or festooned with spoils and offerings. Upon it perfumes were burnt, libations poured, and sacrifices made. An altar was small, and if not placed in a temple, stood under an arch, or in an Ædiculum. In shape, it was square, oblong, or triangular. There were the domestic altars of the Domus, to the Lares and Penates, and the public altars of the Great Deities for the multitude.

The Ara at Syracuse only laid bare in 1839, was constructed expressly for the burning of hecatombs of victims in honour of the gods. On the Ara before me, 450 oxen were annually sacrificed to Jupiter.

It is divided into three parts, or stages, reached by steps. On the first, or lower stage, the women sat, and the victims were killed by the servitii, or inferior priests. (Upon this stage I can still see some indications of stone runnels to carry off the blood.)

On the second stage, the freedmen and citizens were placed. On the upper one, or summit, the priests, standing before great furnaces of wood, roasted the flesh of the victims, pouring over them oil, wine and spices. An Ara, therefore, of this size, was adapted not only to bear the weight of such amazing sacrifices, but also of the whole assembled city.

The Ara at Syracuse was dedicated to Jupiter, and is the largest recorded, excepting that of Pergamos, in Asia Minor, numbered among the nine wonders of the world.

What magnificent ideas the Romans, under Marcellus, must have formed of Syracusan architecture! How they must have stared at this Brobdignagian altar, so much bigger than anything at Rome, or even in Greece. (The Ara of Olympia was but a square of eighty feet.) Did they attribute its vast size to the excessive piety of the Syracusans? Or were they informed that it was a tardy record of national gratitude to Jupiter for escape from the tyranny of Gelon's weak brother — the tyrant Thrasybulus?

Close by, I find myself in full Roman antiquity; before the amphitheatre or circus, one of the only imperial monuments left in Syracuse.

This also is built of limestone, mostly excavated from the solid rock, and dates from about the Christian Era, when Augustus established a Roman colony at Syracuse. At all events it did not exist when Cicero was Quæstor.

We know that Rome had no theatre of stone before the reign of Augustus. Is it likely, therefore, that a captive city—however famous in its day—should possess one before the capital?

The change of representation, too, from the theatre to the games of the circus, is all Roman; a proof of the submission of the vanquished Greek.

As long as they were a free people, the refined and humanely-tempered Hellenes, abhorred all sanguinary shows, hideous images, and suggestions of suffering and death; nor could their Roman conquerors ever instil into their minds, any sympathy with their own love for barbarous exhibitions.

How closely they meet upon the same hillside—the Roman and the Greek—the Theatre and the Circus. Yet what divergence of taste and habit these two monuments display!

The Roman, fierce, aggressive, formidable, thirsting for war, carnage and conquest; the Greek, refined, idle voluptuous, ready enough

to fight when forced by tyrants to do so, but accepting war as an accident in a life of æsthetic ease.

Then from the people pass to the position of the two monuments.

On the same hill-side in Neapolis, and with the same outlook as the Grecian Theatre, the Roman circus carefully sunk below the level of the ground, is as striking for the want of any prospect as is the other for its glorious view.

Doubtless, the *débris* of the excavation piles up the ground in front; but the Amphitheatre must always have lain in a hollow.

In no Roman theatre or circus, except such as are raised on Grecian lines, as at Taormina, is there apparent any of that abstract love of the beautiful in nature, which led the Greeks to choose the finest sites—that epicurean instinct, to absorb, as it were, at the same moment all that nature and art could offer to enthral the sense.

The pleasure-loving Greek would have his theatre like his temples—spacious, airy, elegant, hung up, if possible, between earth and sky, on some gay, breezy rock, on a mighty sea terrace—on the verge of a vast open plain, or,

as here, nestling on the slope of some smiling eminence, open to land and sea.

How unlike the Roman! He came to his games to fire his soul with blood, to revel in slaughter, and to give the signal of death! Closed in with solid walls, there was nothing to distract his eye from the carnage going on in the arena. He could identify himself with it.

Not only the site chosen, but the architecture is equally opposed to the grace and symmetry natural to the Greek.

Man writes his mind on his works. Monuments are but the record of the masses, to be accepted as proofs of a nation's qualities, as much as history of its deeds.

This particular amphitheatre at Syracuse possesses no special charm either of history or of art.

It is of ellipitic form, under the level of the soil, and, in itself, neither imposing nor pleasing.

Though larger than the amphitheatres of Verona and Puzzuoli, it is much less perfect. There are the remains of eight gates; some for the audience, others for the gladiators and for the wild beasts.

In the centre, I see traces of large stone

cisterns or fountains, communicating with the same acqueduct which gushes out so gracefully from the Nymphæum, and trickles over the stone benches of the theatre (the same aqueduct cut by the Athenians on Epipolæ),—used for turning the arena into a naumachia for sea-fights and water pageants.

There are no subterranean chambers, I am told, under the amphitheatre, so that the wild beasts must have been kept in *vivariæ*.

Between the Ara close by and the circus in Neapolis, the Humanitarians would have had ample scope for reform; only that the Greek offered holocausts to his gods, and the Romans but gratified a gross appetite for bloodshed.

CHAPTER XI.

Achradina.—The Crypt of San Marziano.—The Catacombs.—The Saracenic Siege.—End of Day in Syracuse.

AT two o'clock I am down the hill again upon the shore of Achradina, under the same avenue of ragged mulberries—the only trees, I believe, in modern Syracusè—bordering the "Village Green" (and they are dwarfed, maimed, and deformed), which I passed on my way to Epipolœ.

To the outward eye, this strip of sun-dried beach presents nothing but mediæval churches, utterly out of sympathy with Pagan Syracuse.

The ancient walls, especially the old sea-wall leading to the Sea Gate near Cape San Panagia, behind the Capuchin Convent, far more ancient than those of Dionysius, must be laboriously sought for among the walled-up fruit gardens which cover the site.

The oldest part of this outer city is undoubtedly Achradina, which follows on to the shore and beach of Tyche, on the reverse, or seaward, side of the Epipolœ hill, by which we mounted to Euryalus.

The overflowing of the city took place, it is thought, in the time of Gelon, B.C. 500. (I have said this before, but let that pass.)

Bit by bit, the wild pear-trees of the primitive downs disappeared to make way for buildings. This part of Achradina, Dennis says, "being at first rather a site for national monuments than for the common purposes of life." Houses came later as the population rapidly increased, and Tyche, Temenitis, with temples, and Neapolis, with its theatre, were added on as city quarters.

Such was the process of formation in Outer Syracuse.

The three Norman churches, San Giovanni, Santa Maria di Gesù, and Santa Lucia, almost in a line beneath the undulations of the hill, are all pretty much alike. About a quarter of a mile off flaunts the staring, yellow face of the Capuchin Convent at Cape Panagia, looking out, over massed-up rocks, towards the sea.

How Pagan Syracuse became Christian, is

not my business to explain. St. Paul is said to have found a Christian community established here.

San Martino was the first bishop, and what meant the same in those days of imperial persecution, the first martyr. Agatha of Catania, and Lucia of Syracuse suffered A.D. 251 and 304.

A very green, mouldy, old church is San Giovanni, jammed into a shady corner among walls, heaps of stone, and prickly-pear hedges. A bell and a cross surmount the front. There are three round arches below, fringed with weeds, and a sculptured doorway, with twisted marble columns.

Opposite is a little asteria with the announcement, "*Quì si vende vino di Siracusa.*"

A girl picking another's hair is seated on a stone bench under a vine pergola, while a monk, our cicerone that is to be,—looks on complacently.

A most tumble-down old edifice, with nothing inside it but a brass eagle and a poor fresco—altogether, but the vestibule, or anteroom, to the most ancient crypt of San Marziano below—reached by a dismal stair.

This crypt, which takes the form of a Greek cross, is supported by low, massive pillars.

Behind one of these the monk points out "The Episcopal Seat." In another corner is a broken column, upon which San Marziano was executed, he informs me, and a rude stone altar where *St. Paul said mass ! ! !*

It is historical that St. Paul touched at Syracuse on his way to Rome. But this is not enough. You are asked to believe that he was accompanied by SS. Peter, Mark, and Luke; and that St. Mark also suffered martyrdom here.

Unfortunately, another legend claims St. Mark for Alexandria. However, you had better not mention this to the monks at Syracuse, if you wish to preserve a whole skin.

Up again, out of the crypt, quite staggered by Christian traditions; and down again, once more under a low arch and another flight of steps into the catacombs, said to be eight miles in extent, if indeed, as some affirm, they do not reach to Catania!

(Much faith is required in this part of my day's work.)

A ray of sunlight,—for these catacombs are by no means sunk deep into the earth, shoots down upon these walls of death, and displays rows of yawning sepulchres, hewn in the rock;

not in stages or layers, as in Rome, but in horizontal lines as in the Street of Tombs.

Here whole generations lie on their last beds, side by side, taking their rest together.

Some in carved sarcophagi, stolen, probably, from the Greeks; others in rows of simple rock-pits; and there are small loculi cut in between, like after-thoughts, for the bodies of infants and children.

At intervals, open out large, domed chambers, banqueting-halls for the dead, lighted by shafts, down which the sun pierces through screens of ivy and creepers.

Nowhere have any bones been found. Are these strange loculi, so unlike any other catacombs, to be ascribed to the early or to the later Greeks, the Romans, Saracens, or Christians?

Various and discordant are the opinions.

Were they like the Latomiæ, used as prisons, in that tyrannous State which needed so many? Dens for wild beasts, quarries, barracks, or refuges?

No one knows.

It is said that they date back to the time of Archias, more than seven hundred years before Christ.

Be it so. But what interests me is that I

stand face to face with the Saracens, who in A.D. 749 fortified themselves here.

We have all the particulars of this Saracenic siege of Syracuse in Amari, as related by a monk called Theodorus, belonging to the metropolitan church.

And a most pitiful account does Theodorus give of that time, when a measure of wheat was sold for fifty byzantines of gold, the flesh of horses and donkeys weighed against silver, and even dead bodies devoured with avidity.

For nine months this dismal state of things continued.

At last a breach was made in the "Great Tower of Defence," and the Saracens entered Ortygia.

Now this "Tower of Defence," "situated on the neck of land extending right-hand from the city," must have been no other than the site of what was Dionysius' Great Fortress of the Pentapyla, now Charles V.'s gates, and porcullises, and bridges, always the weakest part of Ortygia, as being nearest to the mainland.

For twenty days the "Great Tower" was defended with the greatest constancy against overwhelming odds, but at last the Saracens carried it by assault, and the entire garrison was put to the sword.

"This," says Amari, with "Amor patriæ" strong upon him, "was the end of Ancient Syracuse."

The city of Gelon, Dionysius, and the Hieros, which Timoleon and Dion came from Greece to deliver, that Agathocles gloried in ruling, Marcellus wept over, and Cicero and Augustus adored!

For two whole months the Saracens were occupied in beating down temples, statues, palaces, tombs, and monuments—everything that was Grecian.

Hence the labyrinth of ruins that we see.

With the catacombs and the churches ended "my day" in Outer Syracuse.

I was back at the hotel by three o'clock. Both the Doctor and S—— were anxiously expecting me. They are like all other strangers, and insist that Syracuse and every other town swarms with brigands!

CHAPTER XII.

History of Ortygia.—Gelon of Gela.—Dionysius fortifies Ortygia.—Born to be Born.—Uncle Dion turned Enemy.—The Fruit of Plato's Teaching.—The Deliverers.—Timoleon in Syracuse.—The Battle of Crimissus.—Hiero II.—The Last Tyrant of Syracuse.

HEAVEN forfend that I should be dull, but being in Ortygia, I must speak, however slightly, of its history!

Nowhere is Syracuse so various as in "the Island." Here the strange phases of her emotional city-life intensify themselves into episodes of fiercest passion; passion, indeed, without patriotism, for every element of change and disunion was there—ambitious and selfish citizens, a fickle, time-serving Demus, and leaders too often beneath the dignity of the Greek name.

At once slavish and turbulent, the Syracusan Greeks could only be dominated by the strong rule of autocrats or tyrants.

Of these tyrants, the first was Gelon of Gela, B.C. 485, whose form hovers like a shadow over the nascent glories of Syracuse. He it was who first raised it to such an overwhelming superiority over the other Grecian colonies, broke up the oligarchy of the Gamori, or primitive landowners, and, by his sagacious scheme of government, united the many discordant elements into a strong whole.

Gelon, too, it was who beat back those new invaders, the Carthaginians, in the decisive victory at Himera, and slaughtered one hundred and fifty thousand prisoners in cold blood!

The extent of his power is also indicated by the fact that the Lacedemonians and Athenians sent an embassy—though to no purpose, to beg his aid against the common enemy, Persia.

Thus at length it came about that Gelon, after a career of complete success, convened that meeting of the citizens in arms upon what is now the "Village Green" in Achradina, clad in simplest raiment, without ornament or weapon, to give an account of his whole life as *Strategus* (general).

No wonder that they hailed him by the names of Benefactor, Saviour, King, and de-

creed that his statue should be set up before the city, in the mean dress he wore.

Gelon was no lover of art, like his brother Hiero, but Hiero was never so popular.

As for a third brother, the unworthy Thrasybulus, his oppressive rule lasted but a year.

Then came Dionysius the Elder, whose acquaintance we have already partially made, a name associated with the grandest phase of Syracusan history.

Of obscure birth, he is first heard of as a soldier in the siege of Agrigentum by the Carthaginians. Then, by skilful intriguing and adroit flattery of the Demus, he creeps on to a dictatorship, and at the age of twenty-five become *Strategus*.

Now it is that Dionysius decides to fortify Syracuse by sea and land. Ortygia—the core of the city, the seat of his power—he surrounds with strong walls, builds a citadel (the Pentapyla), with walls and towers, looking towards the mainland; erects the famous sun-dial, circled by vast pillared porticoes for repose or exercise; bazaars, markets, prisons, a palace with hanging gardens, a mint, magazine for arms, docks, arsenals.

The most skilled artisans flock to Syracuse,

workers in brass and bronze, silver and copper; armourers, potters, masons, architects, and shipbuilders;—Dionysius accepts them all.

Always fighting, always in the front, always ready to put his hand to anything, to run all desperate hazards, Dionysius grew old in harness. His years may be counted by his battles.

An oracle declared "that he was to die after a victory over those superior to himself."

He read the prophecy as of Carthage.

Not at all. It applied to himself. His death followed upon the acting of his play at Athens.

How he died is doubtful.

Now from the palace in Ortygia, where he had been shut up during the lifetime of his father, with women and slaves, Dionysius the Younger comes forth to reign.

Naturally easy-tempered and jovial, he is ruled by the favourite of the hour. Sometimes it is the courtiers who get the upper hand, and let no sober person approach him; then it is Plato, who turns the palace into an academy; or Uncle Dion, laying down an ideal law of liberty impossible to carry out.

Nothing, it seemed, could change the king's

love for Plato. Like a wild beast, Plato had tamed and softened him, and with a beast's affection the Younger clung to him. Not till Plato, after alternating between Athens and Syracuse, had now visited his royal pupil for the third time, did the Younger at last weary of him, and despatch him finally into Greece, under plea of having discovered a second conspiracy against his life.

"I suppose," says the Younger, as he takes leave of Plato on the beach of the Great Harbour, "I suppose, when you return to Athens, my sins will often be the subject of your conversation at the Academy?"

"I hope not," was Plato's disdainful answer; "we must indeed be in want of a subject, to be driven to talk of *you*."

Plato gone, the scene quickly changes. The Younger is often drunk for months together.

We see him once shut up in the Pentapyla, offering terms to banished Dion, whom the people have recalled. But Dion is assassinated.

Then later comes Timoleon the Deliverer; and the Younger, after reigning twenty years, finally collapses, and retires to Corinth as a private man.

"What did you gain?" he was once after-

wards asked by Philip of Macedon, "by giving up so much of your time to Plato?"

"I learned to bear misfortune," is the melancholy answer.

And now those awful forms pass before us—the Deliverers.

Dion is spoken of as "a physician worse than the disease." Plato says of him, "that though reared in the servile court of Dionysius the Elder, he was no sooner acquainted with the knowledge that leads to virtue than his whole soul responded to it."

But Plato was Dion's ruin. A man sincere of purpose, severe and unbending towards himself, he was possessed with the notion of reforming the Syracusans, as Plato had been of reforming the tyrants; and, like Plato, he failed.

And so, although all the Syracusans flocked out to meet him, and scatter flowers on his path, on that day when the Younger was shut up in Ortygia, they soon tired of him in their fickleness, so he left the ungrateful city to its fate, and retired in disgust to Leontini.

Yet again they call him, and again Dion comes, with infinite magnanimity and a patience worthy of Plato.

But it is still the same story. He will remit nothing of his severity; no, not even though Plato writes to him from Athens entreating him "to be less austere."

And so at last came the inevitable plot, and as inevitable death at the hands of assassins.

When Timoleon came from Corinth to deliver Sicily from tyrants, the city of cities had become a howling wilderness. So many of the inhabitants had fallen in the civil wars between "the Younger" and Dion, and so many had fled, that in Ortygia "a crop of grass was growing in the great square before Minerva's temple, high enough to pasture horses; and in the outer city deer and wild boars roamed up and down at will among the ruins."

A crop of grass, indeed; but what a crop of tyrants! Tyrants everywhere! The wretch Icetas at Leontini; Andromachus at Taormina; Hippo at Messina; Mamercus at Catania; Leptines at Apollonia on the north coast, now modern Cefalù; and, worse than all, a Carthaginian fleet flaunting with black-sailed, brazen-prowed galleys up and down the Syracusan waters, with Icetas encamped in Achradina.

How Timoleon defeats Icetas, and evades the Carthaginians, till the moment when, advancing on Syracuse, he finds the Great Harbour empty, were too long to tell.

After that exhibition of iconoclastic zeal against the statues of the tyrants which I have spoken of, Timoleon set forth on his Quixotic expedition to knock off the heads of living tyrants.

Keen upon his prey, he threatens the Phenician settlements in the north-west, which rouses the Carthaginian spleen to such an extent that war is again declared. "This time Syracuse shall fall;" Hamilcar and Hasdrubal are to strike the blow!

As Timoleon with his brave twelve thousand Greeks, marches forth to meet them, he meets some mules laden with parsley, and, seizing a handful, twists it into a chaplet, and wears it as a symbol of victory.

It is a long road by the plain to the north-west, towards Panormus (Palermo), Ragusa, Noto, and the shore. The river Crimissus, where the Carthaginians lie encamped, falls into the sea not far from Alcamo, a modern town upon a hill—still looking down over the ancient battle-field, with

many a Moorish tower and Norman façade within its walls.

The season is summer; the time break of day; the weather hot and sultry, with clouds and brooding storms.

From the deep valley, dotted with palms and cistus, and delicate openings to the sea through lines of parting hills, where, deep below, the Crimissus tosses over its rocky bed,—a thick mist rises. Nothing can be seen of the barbarian camp below; only the inarticulate noise and hum as of a vast multitude come swelling up the glen.

We who have been there know what Sicilian river-beds are—a tangle of oleanders, wild myrtle, tamarisk and acacia, with here and there a cypress, overshadowing a deep solemn stream.

As the sun rises over the hills, the vapours expand and spread, the mists lift themselves.

Now it is the Syracusans who are veiled, while all below in the river-gorge is clear.

The Carthaginians—led by Hasdrubal and Hannibal in person, are at the ford, in the very act of crossing. There are the great Tunisian horses, without manes and ears, shaved to the skin, with silver horns on their foreheads

rhinoceros-like, bearing the Carthaginian chiefs, robed in black stuffs, fastened over their armour with clasps of gold, and necklaces and earrings of coloured stones, followed by tame panthers and fierce dogs of the desert, leashed together; elephants with painted ears, caparisoned in bronze, worked into fine scales, with brass towers on their backs; within each, sit three sable archers, ready with their bows; baggage piled upon dromedaries; the sick and wounded lashed upon mules; war-chariots drawn by camels; chariots covered with brass and shining scythe-blades at the wheels, to sweep the enemies' ranks, grating upon the rocks; war-engines and catapults borne by elephants ploughing through the deep stream; shields inlaid with jewels catching the morning sun; pikes, battle-axes, and spears; a casque of bronze, or a brass bracelet burning in the light; troops of light-riding Libyans, swarthy Numidian horse, fleet with lance and dart; tight-set Iberians, and behind, marching heavily downward, to the sound of trumpets, cymbals, flutes, tympanums and drums, seventy thousand men, resplendent in white bucklers—the pick of Hasdrubal's army.

As Timoleon gives the word, the trumpets

sound, and the twelve thousand charge after him.

The veteran Carthaginians, armed with breast-plates of iron and bronze, repel the first attack, unexpected as it is. But when Greek and Barbarian stand shoulder to shoulder on the river's edge, and instead of pikes, battle-axes, and javelins, short swords and scimitars are drawn, and art as well as strength is needed, the heavy-armed Carthaginians waver.

At this moment, a sudden darkness overspreads the earth; long forks of lightning sweep across the downs, and awful thunder echoes in the gorge.

The storm, pent up since morning, is at the back of the Greeks, but full in the face of the Carthaginians; torrents of rain swell Crimissus into a flood; the wind howls in the crannies of the rocks; deafening hail beats into their eyes, and clatters upon their metal armour; horses neigh, camels groan, elephants raise their unearthly shriek; massive chariot-wheels sink in the deep soil; mules and dromedaries flounder, and heavily-armed soldiers lose their footing.

Where they fall they lie. The folds of their

tunics fill with water; the red soil clings to their feet.

If the Carthaginians are unwieldy and heavily-armed, the Greeks, light-footed and ready-handed, slaughter them with ease upon the slippery ground.

Four hundred riders in the first rank are instantly cut down; thousands are trampled upon the shiny banks; others fall back into the river, and are carried off by the swollen current; but the mass of the great army flies over the rise, and is pursued and overtaken by the Syracusan horse.

Numbers cannot be counted in such a rout; but when the storm ceases, and the sun shines out again upon the gorge of the Crimissus, the very earth is knee-deep with the bodies of the slain. And such spoil!

The tent of Timoleon is piled with glittering treasures. Besides the jewelled breastplates, casques, shields, golden armlets, earrings, bangles, and sandals, there are drinking-cups, sparkling with uncut gems, carvings in ivory, plates of worked bronze, bucklers of graven brass, lances, darts, spears, embroidered silks for tents, purple canopies; red, green, and golden embroideries.

The lowest Dorian hoplite despises the brass and the bronze — only the gold, and silver, and jewels are worth the trouble of gathering.

For three whole days the Syracusans were engaged stripping the dead.

When Timoleon returned to Syracuse his work was done. Not only had he broken the Carthaginian power and restored peace, but all Sicily was freed from tyrants.

So I leave Timoleon, to be interred in due time and with due honours at the Timoleonteium.

Of Agathocles, the next tyrant, I shall speak in another place.

Hiero II., who followed him, of obscure birth like Dionysius the Elder, rose from a simple soldier to be general and then king, winning his spurs in the Sicilian wars of Pyrrhus.

A great and enlightened ruler Hiero, whose laws, known as the *Leges Hieronimæ*, were observed all over Sicily, and, as bye-laws, respected even by the Romans. Magnificent in his tastes, he built another great palace in Ortygia, in place of the one demolished by Timoleon. He was also the cousin and patron

of Archimedes, who encouraged him to build that monstrous galley called the "Syracusan," with twenty banks of oars from stem to stern; chambers encrusted with ivory and precious stones, mosaic floors of jasper, topaz, and porphyry, representing scenes from the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," a gymnasium, baths, libraries, an arsenal, fish-ponds, dancing-halls, and an academy for philosophy. Altogether, a galley so enormous that the sea, it is said, "bore it with astonishment." Even the Great Harbour could not float it, and it was finally disposed of in Egypt as a present to King Ptolemy.

By the wise policy of Hiero, Syracuse "looked on" unharmed at the mighty contest between Rome and Carthage, declaring itself as a spectator only,—for the former.

So Hiero dies, at the ripe age of ninety, urging his grandson and successor Hieronymus, with his dying breath, "To keep true to the Roman alliance."

But the new king, a boy of fifteen, knew so much better than his grandsire, that he at once became the ally of Carthage.

Alas for Syracuse! within fifteen months Marcellus was besieging it, and Hieronymus

lay dead, assassinated in the streets of Leontini.

As Gelon of Gela was the first, Hieronymus was the last tyrant of Syracuse; a leap as from Augustus to Augustulus!

After him the city of cities sank into a provincial capital.

In this slight outline I have endeavoured to sketch the history of Ortygia.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lovely Sea Walk.—Pier and Custom House.—Arethusa's Fountain.—A "Miasmic Ditch."—Proserpine's Veil.—The Nymph Cyane.—The Olympeium.—The Necropolis at Polichne.—Gelon's Tomb.

BELOW the Sun Hotel lies the Great Harbour, a blue world, wonderfully calm and beautiful!

Blue sky! Blue sea! Golden blue lights resting on the lines of shore, the castle point of Maniace, and the promontory of Plemmyrium just fringed with wild olives—brownish-blue on reedy Anapus and the plain, whitish-blue on the heights of Neapolis and Tyche, and palely, delicately blue in the mists of the far distance.

Along the harbour stretches a charming sea-walk, called "the Marina," where marble seats, avenue rows of pepper-trees with leaves trembling in the breeze, oleanders shedding

their last pink blossoms, and glorious date-palms expanding their yellow-fruited heart-cones to the sun.

Behind, a high, sheltering wall or rampart, one mass of passiaflora and exotic creepers, shuts all in. Upon the summit range themselves the gayest and prettiest houses in Syracuse!

All this is so different from the ugliness of the town. I stand amazed.

Can this have been the site of Dionysius's famous gardens? I ask S——, who is with me. "And has it *persisted* in keeping itself beautiful ever since?"

S—— cannot enlighten me. There is no one else to ask. An old fisherman is sitting astride on one of the marble benches, mending his net, and an officer is spurring a terrified young horse into a wild gallop up and down. I do not count the beggars, who even here charge at me out of remote corners, like modern catapults.

It is a lonely solitude. No one ever comes here, even on festa days.

Among the bones of dead and buried Syracuse, sunshine and sea breeze, the perfume of flowers and the shade of scented groves are inappropriate.

Alas! how are the mighty fallen!

The Great Harbour opens before me, where two Athenian fleets went down in blood.

Now Mr. Bibby's smart new yacht, with sails as white as snow, rides triumphantly at anchor, and happy mortals may espy the two Miss B.'s, attired in brilliant blue costumes, leaning over the side engaged in fishing. (I have, I think, said that the Great Harbour is five miles round, with all the appearance of an inland lake.)

A shabby steamer from Malta, with a tubby keel, promising little for the comfort of passengers during the ten hours of boisterous passage, is getting up steam, and countless brown-sailed fishing-boats are tacking about the quiet waters from shore to shore.

The little pier-head is darkened by a coal-barge unloading. Among the black dust lie, quite uncared for, heaps of lemons, oranges, prickly pears, green almonds, and yellow cakes of sulphur.

Some olive-skinned street-boys, with a pretence of clothes, are in the act of helping themselves to the oranges. One urchin, evidently an economist by nature, is not eating, like the

rest, but silently stuffing his pockets for future use.

No one interferes. A group of sailors, seated on a low wall, smoke and listen, more or less drowsily, to an "anziano" (ancient man) reciting Tasso in a falsetto voice, his quivering old hands beating a kind of measure.

To the right, in a curve of the shore, there is another pier—a degraded one, for fishermen only. The smoke from the railway station just behind, in Neapolis, settles over it, and behind there are warehouses, and a tall chimney, also puffing.

It is here that the "Brook of the Washerwomen" falls into the Great Harbour, marking the southern limit of the last camp of the Athenians.

"Why is it," as Doctor P—— says, "that, in the midst of so many great wars, I am always thinking of the Athenians?"

I put this question to S——, who has had a bad night, and has come down to take a "*sun-bath*," as he says—"I think it is," he answers, "because, as Freeman puts it, the tale is told by Thucydides in the finest prose poem in the world. Carthage fought for many centuries, not only at Syracuse, but all over Sicily and

along the coasts of Italy, more bravely and much more desperately than the Athenians during that really small siege, of one Greek state against another. But Carthage had nobody but slipshod old Diodorus to record her valiant deeds, and who cares to read Diodorus ?

We pass the Dogana—a stone building, with many doors—in and out of which the doganieri, in a blue kind of uniform, pass, with a feeble effort at having something to do. A flight of marble steps leads to a marble landing-stage, and a marble pillar holds the rope of a freshly-painted six-oared barge, abandoned apparently by all mankind.

This is life at Syracuse.

Around the Dogana, a small grove of Judas trees and pomegranates, so beautiful in the far south, shade the limits of a stiff, box-bordered garden. Beyond, a huge mass of rock, or wall, or both, descends from the ramparts to the shore, and ends the Marina.

Into this rock we plunge, through a long, cavernous passage, to emerge in a blaze of sun at the Fountain of Arethusa. Ye gods and goddesses, was ever anything so hideous!

The Fountain of Arethusa is a semicircular stone bear-pit, lined with fresh masonry, very

high on one side, towards the town, and very low on the other; guarded by a neat balustrade, where a custodian stands, rattling his keys, inviting us to descend upon a pavement, reached by steps, through a cast-iron gate.

Such is Arethusa!

Cicero calls the Fountain "sweet water." Truly it is very clear and very deep (twenty feet), and exquisitely pellucid; as beautiful water as heart can desire, if let alone; but having been meddled with, the salt brine has been let in, and it has grown brackish.

The spring gurgles out of an archway in the high portion of the wall, by four openings —just as Strabo described it, so long ago; and it is so abundant that it overleaps the verge, and ripples forward in tiny wavelets to our feet.

Tufts of graceful papyrus wave over the surface, the long reeds shooting boldly up from below, and dragon and butterflies flit among the spikes.

The sacred fish, not to be eaten even in the extremity of famine, are gone; gone, too, the splendours of Diana's Grove, where, under the shade of ilex, cypress, and laurel, the statue of the goddess, adored by pagan maidens and

wives, who invoked her help as Catholics do that of the Virgin, mirrored itself in the fountain.

Meanwhile, as S—— says, "we will thankfully accept that solitary carobia;" and he points to a wide-spreading tree, clothing an angle of the wall. "Even *one* tree is precious in such a chaos of stone!"

A solid bastion divides the Fountain from the Great Harbour. Standing where we are, we cannot even *see* the water—as much shut out as if it were an enemy.

Cicero speaks of "*a wall;*" but who built these special walls I do not care to inquire. The Spaniards, I believe.

S——, in a low wail, consigns them and their work to everlasting perdition!

"Alas! this is Arethusa!" he continues, casting a rueful glance around; "Diana's friend and Shelley's heroine! Arethusa, who, beautiful as day,

> "'arose,
> From her couch of snows
> In the Acroceraunian mountains.'"

"Shelley has done all that the refinement of poetry can do to idealize her, and the Syracusan municipality have certainly banished the

washerwomen; but she is hopelessly vulgarized, all the same."

"Surely she need not have fled from Greece to be buried in such a hole!"

"Beautiful Arethusa!" continues S——, sighing, "with her rainbow, and 'footsteps paved with green,' who has been running, running from Alpheus ever since history began—to be so caught at last! Why, this is worse than Cyane buried in her pool, and Acis and Galatea parting lava-beds. The Ionian Sea cannot even look at her now; and as to Diana—well, Diana is turned into Santa Lucia in our time; and Santa Lucia certainly does not care for Arethusa!"

Facing me, on the opposite shore, a small river passes under the staring white arch of a commonplace bridge (San Guiseppe), and disappears into the Harbour.

Poor Cyane! She lives a long way off among the water meadows. The banks of the Anapus, by which she is reached, are, I regret to say, very muddy; and on a hot day, not unpleasantly odoriferous. The Doctor, indeed, calls the Anapus, "a miasmic ditch, foul enough to poison a generation."

Anapus (modern Anapo), is clothed by a

rank growth of papyrus, arundo dorax, acanthus, and water-lilies. This sounds beautiful on paper, but in reality means slimy banks of water-reeds, fouled and trodden down by droves of lean red oxen, with round menacing eyes, which rush down to stare and stamp at the stranger, helplessly seated in a flat punt, towed through many weary windings.

If Proserpine dropped her veil now on the banks of Anapo, heaven knows in what a condition poor Mother Demeter would find it.

The Nymph Cyane is hid in a beautiful pool dedicated to Proserpine—"a dark blue water," as the poet sings.

At the bottom, are many-coloured pebbles, and fish as brilliant as those "who did their duty" so long ago in the "Arabian Nights."

Here Pluto dashed in, driving his fiery chariot across the plain from Enna, with "white armed" Proserpine by his side. It was the sight of Proserpine by Pluto's side which broke poor Cyane's heart. Her bubbling tears have never ceased to flow.

Vainly had Ceres wandered all over Trinacria in search of Proserpine, and while she wanders, the earth is stricken with barrenness.

Arethusa had told her, and Apollo also

repeated it, that it was Pluto who had carried her off, and that she had vanished into the earth at the pool of Cyane. Ceres, too, had found Proserpine's veil close by, lying on the banks of Anapus. Now she questions Cyane, but the Nymph is silent. Faithful Cyane!

Then it is that, standing on the pool's brink Ceres calls on Jupiter for vengeance.

"Vengeance on Pluto!" thunders Jove, astride upon a storm-cloud, "Impossible! My brother Pluto is next to me in greatness. As I rule space, and Poisedon the wide seas, so Pluto rules in Hades. He is too mighty for vengeance, as you are my sister, most venerable Ceres!"

But Ceres does not see this at all. Brother or no brother, still she clamours for vengeance, for her child!

It cannot be! Proserpine has eaten the pomegranate seeds, and Ascalaphus has seen it. Proserpine is Queen of the infernal regions, and immortal.

Then that compromise is come to between Jupiter and Ceres. Fruit-bearing Proserpine is to live six months on earth, and six months in hell. Again the earth is fertile; the grass upon the mountain laughs, the vineyards

purple with abundant grapes; the olive boughs are heavy with fruit; and rich corn crops load the fertile earth.

Standing on the brink of Cyane's pool, I see, a little to the left, a gentle rise among indian-corn fields and meadows; so gentle indeed, that looking across from the Great Harbour it might escape the eye altogether, in such a world of flats and cloud-shadows.

A great temple crowned the rise dedicated to Zeus Urios—Lord of the Winds, which indeed meet here from every quarter—not to be confounded with the Temple of Jupiter Olympus, on the beach of Achradina.

This ancient shrine of the Olympeium, built by the Gamori, in the dawn of time, and vast and solid as is the Doric temple of Minerva, still left to us in Ortygia,—was approached by broad flights of steps, cut in the green platform, and surrounded by dark woods of planes and laurel. In the shadows stood altars to rustic gods—Hermes and Terminus, Sylvanus and Faunus, and shrines to good old Pan.

The four sides were adorned with pillars—drummed and fluted in the native fashion; and on the pediments stood statues of the gods—

coarsely sculptured, it is true—as were the metopes within the peristyle, but venerable from their antiquity.

A massive cornice caught the morning sun, and the flat roof glistened with metal tiles. The statue of Jupiter sat in the cella, clad in that mystic robe of many colours, woven for him by his daughters, the maiden goddesses, Diana, Pallas, and Proserpine, from Siculian flowers.

Hippocrates of Gela coming to besiege Syracuse, pitched his camp on the rise of the Olympeium ; but Gelon, himself a Hierophant, and more pious, dedicated to the god his Carthaginian spoils taken at Himera, in the form of a golden mantle.

"Gold!" cries that arch-cynic, Dionysius, a century later, when tyrant in his turn, "Who ever heard of gold for immortals! Why, I have just cut off the golden beard of Apollo! His father Æsculapius was content with hair. What does Zeus want with a golden mantle? Too hot for summer and too cold for winter! Strip it off. Give him a coat of wool!"

At Polichne was the city Necropolis, close by, on the open plain. Here a little town sprung up connected with the great shrine, where priests and servants lived, and chaplets

and wreaths, flowers, offerings, and torches were sold on wooden stalls to worshippers from the town.

Being in the open country, the largest tombs, like that of Cecilia Metella, outside Rome, were fortified, and used as defences against hostile armies. And it was here Gelon lay interred, at the Nine Towers, a castle of great strength belonging to his wife, Demareta, daughter of Theron of Acragas.

On a certain day, five hundred years before Christ, a long pale line, as of a countless multitude, dim in the distance, wended its way along the shore of the Great Harbour to Polichne—a procession without pomp of music or show of statues, trophies, torches, or banners.

To the Nine Towers it came, bearing the honoured corpse of Gelon. Over him the Demus raised a sumptuous monument, and decreed heroic honours.

In due time Demareta, his faithless wife, was laid beside him. He had so willed it, and Gelon's word was law. In her funeral pomp she wore upon her brow the golden crown given her by the Carthaginians in gratitude for her merciful interposition at Himera.

Now Polichne has disappeared; Gelon's

monument is gone; the fortress of the Nine Towers has vanished. Agathocles, who could not brook the greatness of Gelon, destroyed the tomb, which the Carthaginians had already sacked.

Two mutilated shafts upon the rise of the Olympeium, the highest staggering earthwards, alone remain, all that is left of Jupiter's Temple, Polichne, the fortress of the Nine Towers, and Gelon's grave!

CHAPTER XIV.

Visions.—The Great Harbour.—The Athenian Fleet.—"Try them by Sea."—Syracuse Conquers.—The Column at Noto.—At the Ford.—The Latomia del Paradiso.—"Just as the Greeks saw it."

I HAVE described the Great Harbour as it is; but I have said no word of its history.

Now—how can I sit by it, day after day, and not evoke visions of the past?

I will set down my thoughts as they came to me, musing idly, on my favourite seat—a marble bench under a palm—upon the Marina, the high rampart wall behind me, one sheet of exotic creepers, scenting the air with aromatic perfume.

I look south towards Plemmyrium, and a new horizon unfolds.

The ragged fringe-line of wild olives melt

away, and three Grecian forts mark the sky-line. They are so placed as to command the harbour-mouth and the harbour.

Behind, under the green rise of the Olympeium, the army of Athenian Nicias lies encamped; his fleet lies at anchor close at hand.

The day is just breaking. In answer to the signal of Gylippus, who has said, "Try them by sea," half of the Syracusan fleet is foaming through the water of the Great Harbour, leaving the shelter of the city walls.

The other half, by a preconcerted movement, rounds the southern wall of the city from the lesser port, and passes the rocky point on which stands the Temple of Juno.

The Athenians, imitating these tactics, also divide their galleys into two divisions. Forty triremes row to meet the Syracusans; the rest remain to guard the beach of Plemmyrium and the camp.

Gallantly the Athenians fight at the harbour's mouth, until they have beaten the Syracusan fleets.

Then they proudly row back to their moorings under the Temple of Hercules, and take up their old position under Plemmyrium.

But if the Athenians have had the best of it by sea, by land Gylippus has clearly conquered.

The three Athenian forts on Plemmyrium are his; money, naval stores, provisions, all his.

It is a great victory. Henceforth the harbour mouth is closed against the Athenians.

I look east. The Athenians are in their last camp on the marshy shore at the extreme end of the harbour, close upon Syracuse.

Only a little brook divides them from the hill-side of Neapolis, where stand the statue of Apollo and his grove.

The marsh of Lysimelia is behind; the river Anapus to their left.

The great plain is dried up; hot mists lie on the low grounds, the pear orchards in Achradina droop from the heat, the very olives flag.

It is autumn. Already the heavy fever-stricken air has done its work. The dead are being carried outside the camp for burial in the marsh; the dying lie about among the tents, and those not stricken sit heavy and heart-sick, dreaming of their far-off Attic homes, their wives and little ones at peace under the pink

and purple tints of setting suns and pearly-dawning morns in native Attica!

So close to the city as they are! Why, the Syracusans are before their very eyes, white-robed matrons watching them from the ramparts; Corinthian guards sharpening their swords on the walls; the savage Sicani letting fly their arrows at them in jest. See! To-day the people are holding a market on the quays to sell meat, fruit, and wine to the sailors.

The flower-girls, fruit-sellers, and watermen are there, and singers shouting ribald songs in ridicule of Athens!

Every moment, full boat-loads are coming in for provisions from the fleet, with just time for the sailors to snatch a hasty morsel and depart.

There is but one thought in the Athenian camp, from Demosthenes, the brave sea-general, down to the lowest slave, and that thought is *Flight!*

Yet Nicias will not listen to Demosthenes and Eurymedon. He would rather face defeat than the indignation of the people at Athens.

Still they urge him. Then the moon is eclipsed—a fresh excuse for delay. Nicias will not stir until three times three days after

the eclipse, and when all due sacrifices have been offered to the gods.

On the third day, Gylippus orders his troops on board, and stands out in order of battle.

So low have the puissant Athenians fallen in public esteem, the very shop-lads and street-boys follow in fishing-boats and skiffs "to see them beaten."

One lad, Heraclides, rows in so near them, that an Athenian galley touches his boat's prow. Heraclides will surely be taken, and a great ransom asked! No! Just in time, Uncle Pollichus, a sea-captain, bears down before the wind, charges in with ten Syracusan triremes, and rescues him!

Now comes the extreme moment when the Athenians must conquer or die. Nicias makes his final appeal; he exhorts crews and captains; he entreats them to remember that they have no reserves, no more triremes, that it is their last chance. "Recall," he concludes, "the past glories of Athens; our honoured Penates and the temples of the gods!"

Boldly, too boldly, does the Athenian fleet answer to his word; the Syracusan galleys close round them in a circle.

Now do the Athenian galleys, built light for rapid motion through the water, and to answer readily to every change of helm, feel the want of good sea-room in the narrow limits of the harbour. The Athenian tactics are, to avoid direct attack, to retreat before receiving the shock of an enemy's prow, then to return and strike, by driving their metal beaks into some weak part of the adversary's hull so rapidly, that he cannot retaliate. In all these manœuvres the Athenians are great.

But all this requires space. Here the very size of their fleet is an impediment to them.

The Great Harbour is but five miles round, and half of it is taken up by the Syracusans! The Athenians are so closely packed, they can neither advance nor retreat, tack nor stand to windward; one vessel drives up against another, and cannot get itself loose. As one captain boards the trireme of an enemy, he is himself grappled by a third.

Such a multitude of vessels never fought in so small a space before!

The crash, the clamour, is overwhelming. The bowmen, slingers, and throwers hurl masses of stones, darts, and missiles; the metal prows thunder against each other, be it friend

or foe. It is all confusion. Skill is of no avail. The word of command is inaudible; the officers cannot shout loud enough. Their voices are only heard by a few about them.

"Let none escape! Will you fly before those who are beaten? For Dorian Gods and altars!" shout the Syracusans in reply, steering madly forward.

The Athenian army, and those left in the camp, press down to the water's edge. With heart and soul each man fights with his fellows. They are all so near, so mixed up together, that in the clear southern air they can see each others' faces, hear each others' voices, mark the line of each familiar form, read the ships' names, and recognize the crews and the captains.

"Victory! victory!" shout the Athenian soldiers from the shore, as Demosthenes scores an advantage. "Undone! undone!" is the lament when Menander is driven back by Python.

Then, as the issue of the battle becomes doubtful, shrieks and groans arise from the beach—invocations to the gods, deadly curses of the Erinnys, execrations and prayers. Some stand paralyzed, others' bodies are contorted by terror, limbs become rigid with suspense.

There are a wringing of frenzied hands, and wild leaps into the air.

Now it is clear the fortune of the day turns wholly for Syracuse. There is no doubt of it. Alas! alas! for the great armament! The pick of the golden youth of Attica! The faithful Siculian allies! The brother Naxians, and Catanians and men of Leontini—The honest Generals, rough and ready Demosthenes, and courageous Menander!

The Athenians are in full retreat. Their triremes are driven straight upon the beach, their transports and light boats drifting rudderless.

Nearer and nearer they come, rising on the crest of the waves, the dead and dying cumbering the decks; the flapping sails, the rowers' empty benches, the wounds of the living, the disabled vessels—all ghastly evidences of defeat. They come with the bloody wash of the tide, with the masses of floating corpses, with oars, rudders, figure-heads, and masts, flung upon the shallow shore.

Syracusans pressing behind, friendly arms stretched out in front!

Such as are living leap to land. They rush, they fly to the shelter of the camp.

The army opens its ranks to receive them—opens, but with groans, shrieks, and execrations.

I shift the scene. I am four miles from Noto, on a wooded height, not far from Cape Passaro. Around is an open, undulating country, broken by dwarf palms, carobia-trees, acacias, and orchards. Near me is a flat, low-roofed house, where, at the door, a peasant guide awaits me.

From this house—little better than a hovel, with a stable and some ruined outbuildings—a narrow footpath leads through the verdure of green cornfields to a gentle rise, on which stands a column of uncemented blocks of lime-stone.

The column, raised on a solid base of steps, and tapering to a point, though broken in the middle, is still lofty. This is La Pizzuta; said to be the veritable trophy erected by the Syracusans after their final victory over the retreating Athenians.

The Fiume di Noto, winding through a deep, rocky defile, runs below. In the Athe-nian's time it was not called Fiume di Noto, but the River Asinarus. Here the last struggle took place between the Athenians and their pursuers.

It is on the eighth, some say the sixth, day of their flight, that the Athenians, under Nicias, near the banks of the Asinarus.

Demosthenes, involved in an inextricable labyrinth of walls, has already surrendered within an enclosure known as "the olive-ground of Polyzelus."

Nicias sends out a horseman to ascertain if this is true. Alas! no horseman ever returns to tell him yes or no!

So weak are the Athenians, so overwhelmed by the agony of thirst, and worn out with perpetual watching and fighting, that they have come to wander on vaguely through brushwood and scrub, from hill-top to hill-top, with no thought but to find water.

No sooner do they behold the stream, than the whole army as one man rushes down to the water's edge; the heavily-armed press on the front ranks, the horses on the hoplites, the hoplites on each other, and the Syracusan horsemen on all!

What matter enemies' lances and darts, flying javelins and arrows, if they can only drink! Drink—drink—for ever!

In their haste to reach the bank, hundreds upon hundreds fall down and trample

upon each other, piling up confused heaps upon the rocky edge.

Those who are on the water's brink fling themselves down full length, or cast themselves upon the shoulders of others. Swords are drawn, mortal blows exchanged, helmets seized for drinking-cups, cuirasses torn off for scoops, and outstretched hands carrying the trickling water to the mouth, seized on by those behind.

Many, standing on the river bank, are so close together, they cannot slake their thirst at all; others die, pierced by their own weapons whilst stooping down; hundreds, entangled and helpless, fall into the stream, and are drifted away by the current.

Even those who can drink their fill—and they are but few—are so galled by darts and missiles of the Syracusans on the further banks of the river, that they die; the Peloponnesian light-horse, too, plunge breast high into the stream, and beat down the foremost ranks cruelly. The waters, shallow with the summer heats, soon run blood—blood and turbid foam.

Only to drink!

At last the carcases of the dead fill up the river-bed, and no more water flows.

It is now that Nicias surrenders himself to Gylippus.

This takes place on the twenty-seventh day of the month Carneus, called by the Athenians Metagitnion (the day was celebrated afterwards at Syracuse by a festival named the Asinaria).

It was decreed that the Athenian soldiers should be sold for slaves, and the freedmen imprisoned in the Latomiæ. The two Generals, Nicias and Demosthenes, were condemned to die; but not waiting for the sentence to be carried out, they fell by their own swords.

Would it have consoled them to know that Euripides will write their epitaph?

Again I change the scene. Now it is the Latomia del Paradiso, behind the Capuchin Convent in Achradina.

A smiling peasant girl opens a little wicket-gate, and I am straightway engulfed in flowering thickets of citron, nespole, daphne, bay, spirea, and oleander.

At my feet spreads a carpet of scarlet geraniums, purple cyclamen, yellow oxalis, and the classic acanthus, with its boldly-veined leaves; there are fuchsias, flag-flowers, many-

tinted peas, and showers of pale pink roses—all wild and dishevelled as Nature has placed them.

Walls of white cliffs rise sheer out of this exotic glen, sheeted and tapestried with ivy; so near together these walls, no sun can penetrate below.

All is as in a delicious twilight, a subdued poetic day—in itself luminous.

The smiling girl, singing to herself as she gaily dances along the path, pulls down snowy branches of orange and nespole, as if they were brambles, scattering the white petals at my feet.

The shrivelled leaves of the fruit-trees are the only indications of the late season. In these evergreen groves there is little change from summer to winter. The cactus, variegated aloes, and prickly pear are of all time, and these, spite of efforts to drive them out, are here also.

On I pass in a great silence. The clouds fly overhead; the birds are mute in the still air; the insects do not hum; the very air mounts to the brain in wafts of intoxicating perfume.

Above, around, rise the limits of this narrow

valley, white, inexorable, cut as with a knife straight down, no issue anywhere.

Here in this most lovely quarry was enacted the last sad scene of the Athenian siege!

Seven thousand soldiers thrust down here after the surrender of Asinarus, as into a living tomb; seven thousand men huddled together, with scarcely standing room, "conscious," as says Thucydides, "that they cannot possibly escape death."

The heat, the glare, the chills of dawn, the dews of night, the change of season, thirst, starvation, wet, in that uncovered dungeon cause a deadly mortality.

Many die directly of their wounds; others languish slowly. The dead and the living are massed together in sickening heaps. The awful stench rises up to poison the outer air.

Thus they lay for seventy days.

The Syracusans, looking down from above over the grassy margin, must have beheld as revolting a scene as ever was enacted in that human tragedy called life!

I wonder, did the wild cactus break the blue sky-line to the longing, hopeless eyes of

the captives as I see it now?—cutting hard and fierce, an infernal fringe between rock and cloud?

Did the trailing caper, and the wild fig, and the ivy, breaking the whiteness of the mocking cliffs, tempt the dying men to scale the walls and fly? Or has this Elysium of verdure come on, only with the damp stillness of decay?

I wander on, stupid with wonder. To this moment the whole scene comes to me like a dream: the hot, breathless air; the dark caves, low mouthed and horrible; the sun-motes slanting down upon a leaf, a petal, or defining the delicate lacework of a fern; the blanched cliffs taking fantastic shapes of pinnacles and towers, or cut and hacked as by Cyclopean chisels, into the semblance of a huge trireme; a gigantic profile; a tomb, a coiling serpent, a monstrous lion!

"Just as the Greeks saw it!" I keep repeating to myself stupidly. "Not a stone changed, not a line altered since four centuries before Christ. And this subdued light was just so; and so were the clouds; only not the groves, nor the flowers!"

Still I walk on, bewildered. Nor do I well

know where I am, until the smiling maiden closes the wicket-gate behind me, and I find myself again upon the rocky stretch of sea-bound Achradina, in the full glory of the setting sun.

CHAPTER XV.

Carthaginians in the Great Harbour.—Himilcon.—Where is Dionysius?—The Pestilence.—The Attack.—The Harbour on Fire.—Himilcon Disappears.

A NEW invader fills the Great Harbour. Instead of Athens we have Carthage.

Magon has just defeated Leptimes, the brother of Dionysius the Elder, in a naval engagement off Catania, and sails superbly triumphant into the port.

Two hundred and eight triremes and galleys follow him, and a close mass of rafts and transports; the line of shipping stretches across from the southernmost point of Ortygia to Plemmyrium.

Spacious as is the vast basin, with its many rounding bays and creeks, there is not room enough for the play of the long oars and the drifting of the anchors.

Nothing is to be seen from Syracuse but sheets of dark sails, and forests of black masts, a burnished background of gilded poops hung with Grecian spoils, pictures, crowns, vessels of gold and silver, goat-skins, statues, arms and armour!

The swarthy-skinned captains sit at the bows, richly clothed, and crowned with poplar-leaves. Others stand as if equipped for battle, round shields of bronze upon their arms, and head-coverings of pointed caps and casques.

In the transports, stabled upon the decks, are the elephants, screeching at the smell of land, the dromedaries, mules for baggage, and brazen chariots.

The African rowers rise and fall with the motion of their oars from raised banks of benches; their bodies bare and oiled, hung with innumerable strings of coloured beads, shells, and charms.

Thus they pass, hands upon oars, shoulders bent forward, arms outstretched, waiting the signal of the trumpet.

It comes, followed by a savage beating of drums and clashing of cymbals! With one long, loud cry, the whole fleet echoes it, and

four great triremes burst from the mass bearing Magon and Himilcon.

The galley of Magon, long and slender, with sweeping purple sails rounding to the breeze, and the dark oars breaking into the water in a sort of stately cadence, is a wonder of barbaric splendour.

See! how it glitters with brass and gold! A gilded sea-horse at the prow, with outstretched legs seeming to paw the waves. On the deck Moorish guards, covered with fine scaled armour, and scarlet mantles surround the chief; behind are ranged the slingers and darters, in tight-fitting breastplates, with rough coarse hair, and heavy barbaric features.

Nor is this gorgeous sea pageant all.

From the west, tramping across the plain by the Helorian road and the banks of Anapus, marches the Punic army, three hundred thousand strong, with three thousand horse, led by Himilcon in person. Himilcon pitches his tent within the Temple of Jupiter Urios, on the Olympeium. He cares nothing for Jupiter. He would spit on the image of the God, if he thought of it, and any African about him would do the same. All creeds and all races are the same to Himilcon.

Himilcon's is a religion of amulets and charms, of maledictions in burnt hair and flesh, incantations, potions, and the bloody rites of Baal. According to circumstances Himilcon sacrifices to the stars or adores the sun.

He believes in nothing but in destruction and in death.

Behold him within the columns of Jupiter's peristyle, his eyes fixed on the smoke of a thousand fires, lighting the blazing ruins on the plain; long pendants are in his ears, and his black beard lies thick and matted upon his breast.

Upon his head glistens a coronet of pearls, shaped in many tiers, like a mitre; on his neck are strings of blue stones, engraved with cabalistic signs.

A black robe flowered with gold, flows down, and he wears bracelets and anklets of uncut gems.

Behind him, a negro holds a golden fringed sunshade, and slaves wave palm branches to keep off flies.

Around the vast host lies encamped an army of many nations.

Gigantic Libyans, with frizzly hair and handsome features; renegade Greeks to be

recognized by their slim figures and clean-shaven faces; Bruteum peasants, clad in sheep-skins; Gauls, with long hair drawn upon the top of the head and fastened with an iron pin; Egyptians, broad-shouldered and thick lipped; archers of Cappadocia, their faces stained with the juice of herbs; Lydians in flowing robes, covered with vermilion, and wearing yellow slippers; Ligurians, Lusitanians, Ethiops, and fugitive Romans,—a motley multitude speaking languages as mixed as their nationalities.

Some lie supported by cushions, dressing their wounds; others stretched full length on their backs, relate their past adventures to each other; a Gaul erect against a tree, passes round the wine-cup to his fellows; and a Roman archer throws arrows at random as the sea-gulls sweep by;—all more or less are in repose according to their nation and habits, yet all are ready at the trumpet's shriek to rush into action.

For thirty days Himilcon's mercenaries ravage the whole city.

Achradina is taken. The Necropolis there and at Polichne are rifled by his Egyptians for treasure.

Not only are the tombs of Gelon and

Demareta destroyed, the temple of Ceres and that of Proserpine burnt, but the whole of Syracuse is over-run.

And where is Dionysius all this time?

Why does he not defend the city of cities, and the temples, and the tombs?

What of his Pentapylæ? His arsenal and magazines of arms for seventy thousand men? His walls on Epipolæ down to the Hexapylum?

Is he afraid? Is he paralyzed? Or is it the calm of a great general shut up within his walls, biding his time?

Neither—Dionysius is only waiting for reinforcements from Greece; and while he waits he leaves it to Anapus and its pestilent ditches, oozing pools, and malarious vapours, the stagnant lake of Lysimachia, parched-up, rocky Plemmyrium without springs or water, slimy harbour shores soft with black mud, to do their deadly work upon the strangers.

Suddenly, no one knows how, Himilcon's arm is seized with panic.

Spectres of hideous Gorgons pursue the soldier through the night. Phantom-Chimeras hover over the camp; Medusa snake-heads seize them, and "the monstrous serpents called

Pythons." The whole brood of Cyclops and Titans seem escaped from Etna, to fight their battles with gods over again, amid the Carthaginian tents; the earth trembles, and pale funereal lights play upon the horizon.

It is said by the priests in Syracuse, and the rumour gains ground day by day, that Jupiter and Demeter, in their wrath, have given over the African host to destruction.

A pestilence breaks out.

It begins among the light-clothed Egyptians encamped in white tents along the ridge of Plemmyrium, passes to the Libyans and Numidians on the plain, and, from these, spreads over the whole Carthaginian fleet and army.

This year the summer heats are long and excessive. In the marshy ground about the harbour, the morning sun brings forth poisonous vapours, to be dried up by the heated miasma of the burning noon.

Dry winds raise up showers of dust, which penetrate the hot skin, poisonous insects abound, and lack of rain dries up the fountains.

It is for this moment that Dionysius has waited.

While he attacks Himilcon by land, the

whole Syracusan fleet steers down upon the Africans. It is an exact reproduction of the battle between Gylippus and Demosthenes; the same locality, the same movements, the same surprises, and the same results.

And now Dionysius, seeing some of the larger Carthaginian galleys intact, and making a feeble resistance, thinks, "It is time it should finish."

"Torches! Torches!" he cries to the guards about him; "Bring handfuls of torches! Burn what is not sunk!"

A brisk sea-breeze fans the flames, and carries them with fiery tongues from ship to ship. By a general impulse, the whole population of Syracuse comes trooping out of doors.

It is an awful sight which meets their eyes. A cincture of fire surrounds Ortygia. That terrible fleet that was to starve and destroy them is ablaze!

Himilcon and Magon escape by making a secret compact with crafty Dionysius, who foresees that his turbulent Syracusans may prove too much for him by-and-by, if the power of Carthage be utterly broken.

So the Carthaginian chiefs sail swiftly and stealthily away, and eluding the pursuit of a

few Corinthian soldiers who have perceived their flight, gain the open sea.

But the miserable Carthaginian army on Plemmyrium, abandoned by their leaders, throw down their arms and beg for quarter.

Their Sicanian allies, from about Lilybœum, make a rush for the mountains, and so save themselves.

But the heterogeneous mass of mercenaries —Ethiopians, Libyans, runaway Romans, Iberians, and Gauls—spared by the pestilence, surrender at discretion.

Such are my day-dreams on the Marina of Syracuse.

I can see it all—the flight of the Athenians across the plain, the Carthaginians by land and sea—Noto, the Latomia!

If I can call up these pictures to the eyes of others, as they stamped themselves on mine, I have not mused in vain.

CHAPTER XVI.

Castle of Maniace.—Temple of Juno.—Bronze Rams.—An Unlucky General.—The Normans Revenge Themselves.—General George turns Traitor.

BEYOND the Fountain of Arethusa, the modern town of Syracuse ends on a low point of black rocks, where stands a mediæval castle. Opposite are the long lines of dark Plemmyrium, now called Isola. Between flows the blue sea.

I should not care about this mediæval castle at all (a square pile of mellow-tinted limestone) occupying the site of what was once the Temple of Juno, with round towers of no particular architecture at its angles, and singularly confused as to loopholes and windows, were it not that here I meet my old friend, General George Maniace, whose acquaintance I made at the Signor Duca's, near Bronté.

At Bronté, General George was fighting against the Saracens in the centre of the island, under the snows of Etna. At Syracuse he has conquered them; bridled them so to say, and put this castle-bit in their mouths. But only for four years, be it remarked. In four years the Saracens, spite of Maniace and his castle, were back again in Sicily as victorious as before.

Nor is this mediæval castle improved by a trim new battery attached to it, with Bersaglieri on guard, pacing up and down in bright uniforms, and abundant black plumes waving from their hats; nor by the trim little light-house rising out of the sea close by.

Ma come si fa? One must take things as they come, especially in Sicily.

General George was a very fine fellow in his way. In many respects equal to Belisarius, only he was unlucky; not only unlucky in war, but unlucky in coming upon the world at the time he did, at the very moment when those incredibly romantic Normans, altogether engrossed European interest.

At Syracuse you cannot overlook Maniace, although only a Byzantine, or modern Greek.

Not only has he a street named after him,

running down from the Cathedral towards this rocky point (a street shabby and dirty enough in all conscience, as are all the streets of Syracuse), but also this castle, in a prominent position at the mouth of the harbour.

Altogether, therefore, Maniace is one of the *Genii loci* of Syracuse, to be placed on a par with Diana the protectress and Minerva the guardian; or even with Dionysius and Santa Lucia; only the valiant and elegantly-nurtured Byzantine might object to such an ill-mannered colleague as Dionysius.

Now the Castello di Maniace is by no means to be mistaken for the site of what Plutarch so wisely calls "the Acropolis" (seeing such never existed at all), or of the Pentapylæ of Dionysius, situated on the opposite or land side of the "island."

Maniace's castle, on the foundation of Juno's Temple, was built by himself, A.D. 1038, remarkably stout and thick as to walls, and serving well as a fortress against those roving Saracens, carrying on the same old foray between Africa and Syracuse, begun in the time of Gelon. In fact, it is quite a modern building in dim, far-off Syracuse, with nothing ancient about it but those two famous rams of

Archimedes, turning on pivots and bleating to the wind, brought back by General George from Byzantium to the city of their birth, and set up here over his gateway,

Pray, let not the curious traveller look for these rams here now.

One has been lost; the other removed to the museum of Palermo. In their place observe the fat coat-of-arms and imperial crown of Charles V. of Spain, as obtrusive and prominent here as on the three drawbridges and three portcullises.

About the removal of the rams there is a very dismal mediæval story, in which a certain Marchese Gerace, the ancestor of Prince Gerace of Naples, figures very little to his credit.

Gerace appears to have received the famous rams as the price of a treacherous massacre of Syracusan notables, from his master, Alfonso, King of Arragon, as great a blackguard, apparently, as Gerace himself.

How one ram found its way to Palermo, I do not know.

What banquets and carousals of the good old sort, with swords on hip, helmets and nodding plumes on head, sword and dagger in

belt, tankard in hand, were held in this fine old castle-hall, with its vaulted wooden roof, carved shafts, and huge fire-place!

For the sake of picturesqueness we must hope the hall existed in Maniace's time; only I fear it did not.

What is more certain is that General George, a heartless, elegant Greek—I can picture him, with an atmosphere of imperial courts about him, clad in inlaid Byzantine armour—having built this castle, could afford to do without his friends the Normans, whom he accordingly cheated of their share of "half the spoils and half the conquered towns."

They had their revenge, however; not only by compassing George Maniace's natural death, but by clean snuffing his name out of history. You must come to Sicily, or read Gibbon, to know that such a man ever existed.

At all periods of his life General George was unlucky. Yet he served his master, Michael Paleologus, well, and was just about to make some great coup which should win Syracuse from the Saracens, and restore it once more to Byzantium, when he was recalled to Constantinople.

At last, wearied by ill usage at home, and

exasperated by the persistent attacks of his Norman adversaries abroad, he turned traitor, proclaimed himself Emperor of the East, and ended miserably by the hand of an executioner at Durazzo.

After all, should his ghost "revisit the glimpses of the moon," it may be gratifying to him to find that his name is still preserved in a ducal dwelling at Bronté, a dirty street at Syracuse, and in this same hideous yellow-faced castle on its bed of black rocks—a perfect eyesore on the azure sea-line of the Great Harbour.

CHAPTER XVII.

Minerva's Temple. — The Doctor's Lamentations. — Diana's Temple.—A Tempest Shut Up.—How the Sea Roars!—Hotel Miseries.—The Doctor's Anxiety.—An Historical Subject.

IT is an inexpressible disappointment to find the great fluted pillars of Athena's Temple sunk into the stone-work of the Cathedral wall. An inattentive person might literally pass through the piazza without observing them.

Not only built into the wall all round, but, on the south side, absolutely concealed and embedded; all except the Doric capitals, which peep out discomfited at the summit.

But, what is even worse, is a double row of *battlements* round the flat, plain roof, giving the grand old sanctuary, grey with accumulated ages, the aspect of a commonplace fortress.

Dennis says the Temple of Minerva was converted into a Christian church in the seventh century, during the reign of Theodosius the Younger, by Zosimus, Bishop of Syracuse. Butler, in his "Martyrology," says Zosimus was a monk of Palestine, and mentions a meeting in the wilderness, beyond Jordan, between him and a certain St. Mary of Egypt, "a short, sun-burnt woman, with white hair;" going the length of relating what St. Mary said on this occasion, and what Zosimus answered. Indeed, Butler is so much occupied with St. Mary, that he forgets to tell us anything about Zosimus, or how he got to Syracuse.

A bell-tower—horrid sacrilege!—added to the indignity of the castellated roof, was erected, but fortunately thrown down by an earthquake.

The same earthquake also slightly displaced some of the great columns, as we see them now.

Modernized without, the building is Christianized within, out of all knowledge.

Yet the grand old pagan walls frown down, naked and forlorn, in a dumb majesty, pathetic to behold.

All down the Cathedral nave are chapels:

chapels to saints, as in the old time there were shrines to deities.

San Marziano, of the Norman church in Achradina, has one chapel, with a curious portrait on a gold panel; and Santa Lucia another.

The Chapel of Santa Lucia (her town residence) is tapestried with offerings—faded flowers, wreaths, votive candles, legs, arms, and hands in effigy, and little daubs of pictures representing death scenes and horrible accidents, in which she was successfully invoked.

The Doctor, who goes in specially for classic ruins, passes hours, I believe, in a kind of mute lamentation over these grand remains, seated, like Dante at Florence, on a stone in a corner of the ugly piazza, the Grecian "market-place," mentioned in Cicero "Upon Verres."

"If they had only left it a ruin," he sighs, quite low and pitiful. "What a monument! Built by the Gamori, six centuries before Christ; the Acropolis, if you *like*, only Syracuse never had an Acropolis; Doric, of course, and limestone—all the temples in Sicily are Doric and limestone; but this one, so old, the architecture is almost Archaic — as large as

Pæstum and Segesta, which means, as any in the world; and in such a noble position!

"Now, many other temples may have been glorious, but we know that this one was.

"A man like Cicero does not go into tall talk for nothing. He speaks of the golden doors, covered with reliefs in ivory and gold, as marvels of beauty.

"It is incredible," the Doctor goes on to say, "how many Greeks have left written accounts of those doors. There were the spears, too, made of brass. 'It is sufficient,' says Cicero, 'to have seen them once, to understand what they were.'"

Then the Doctor passes on to quote the elaborate description given by Dennis: the walls inside covered with portraits of the Sikel kings, as well as twenty-seven wall paintings of Sicanian history, the subjects not specified; and the lofty pedestals between the columns, each bearing the image of a god in bronze, silver, or ivory.

In the cella sat the armed Pallas, "purple-robed Athena, a plumed helmet upon her head, a spear in one hand, in the other a shield, with Medusa's head engraved upon it." Here Physic breaks off to observe that "it was only

Leonardo da Vinci and the cinque centists who made Medusa beautiful; the Greeks represent her as a hideous Gorgon.

"Minerva was partial to the wild olive-tree, so fresh branches were laid around her altar, and an owl, a serpent, a cock, and a dragon, represented at her feet. The roof was of gilded plates, the cornice of marble."

Here Physic again interrupts himself to tell me what I knew, namely, that the Sicilian temples are all built of limestone, and that it was only at Athens marble was used.

"In the highest part there was a great bronze shield cased in gold, to reflect the morning sun."

"Yes," I put in, "as Ducetius saw it, when he came across the plain a fugitive to Syracuse."

"Ducetius!" Physic took me up quite sharp. "I do not care for those Sikels; they have no history."

"The Syracusans considered this shield as a good omen, especially the sailors. It was their custom to take some burning ashes in a cup from the fire on Juno's altar, and sprinkle them upon the waves as they sailed out to sea, their eyes fixed on the shield.

"The temple was raised on three broad steps—a stylobate, they call it (a good place for the beggars! for my part, I think all Sicilians are beggars)—six Doric pillars," pointing to the embedded columns, "in each portico, and a peristyle with fourteen pillars, the pillars twenty-eight feet high, and fluted.

"There is a bit of the architrave and a frieze left on the further side—[we will go and see it]; but the rest was destroyed to make way for Saracenic battlements. Devil take them!

"The Saracens should have been flayed alive!

"Even Marcellus spared this temple. Never touched the treasure or the ornaments—he, a conqueror and a Roman!

"Then that scoundrel Verres——" an expression intervened which I omit, as it might be deemed too strong on paper.

"After the Romans came the Byzantine Greeks, the most effete nation in the world, and turned it into a church, about the time of Belisarius.

"Look at that florid façade of glaring yellow stone; is that a thing to cover an historic temple? The façade was put up by a rascally

Neapolitan bishop in 1754. What a beast! A statue, too, of the Virgin! Mercy on us!

"Then there was an earthquake. Two, I believe."

"Perhaps the earthquakes were worse than the Saracens and the Neapolitan bishop?" I suggested.

"Not at all." The Doctor is uncommonly obstinate when on his hobby-horse. "How many buildings have survived earthquakes? Nothing to do with earthquakes!"

The Temple of Diana, in the Vico San Paolo, is literally nothing but a few piled-up fragments of pillars and blocks of buff-coloured tufa, below the level of the street, in an open space, between two house-walls. Yet this temple was almost as splendid as that of her sister Minerva.

These are the two sanctuaries of the maiden goddesses in the island (the Temple of Proserpine was, as I have said, on the mainland). Neither of these temples can have stood out conspicuous objects in Ortygia, as did the Temples of Ceres and Proserpine at Girgenti, or even those at low-lying Selimonte and Pæstum.

Juno's Temple was on a low cape. Diana's

in a hollow, and the shrine of Minerva (the Cathedral) but very slightly elevated.

The island of Ortygia was sacred to Diana from the landing of Archias. If Ceres was the great mother of Sicily, Diana was the protectress of Ortygia; some coins of the time of Agathocles show this. Minerva was the guardian or president, wiser than Diana, yet less beloved.

Diana's sacred grove, where the Oceanides herded the sacrificial goats and deer, browsing among fields of poppies and dittany, shadowed downwards to the water-edge, beside the Fountain of Arethusa.

A single carobia now its only memorial.

Here Diana reigned in her effigy—a statue with flowing hair, uplooped robe to free her naked limbs, a many-coloured crescent on her brow, and buskined feet. In her grove maidens and matrons sought her, to offer up the toys of childhood, and to invoke her aid in marriage and childbirth.

Of the Hexacontaclinus, or House of Sixty Beds, the Palace of Hiero II., occupied by the Roman Prætors, Timoleon's Hall of Justice, and other national monuments, not even the traditionary sites remain.

While I write, I am sitting in a dark room at the Hotel of the Sun (!), with a view over house-roofs. It has been pouring all day. Alas! People say it will rain for a fortnight!

Can one believe that this dusky canopy of heaven is the same glorious dome which has been shedding such heat and effulgence upon us?

Bank after bank of storm-clouds come riding up from the south, bringing a deluge of rain! And the wind!

I have one window; it does not shut by an inch, and there are holes in the plaster into which I can thrust my fist. A small tornado is passing through my room; I feel chilled to the very bone, and sad.

There is my bed, covered with a patchwork quilt; my glass, out of which all the quicksilver has fled; a dirty paper on the wall, and two washed-out prints.

I speak of a small tornado in the room; but what is that to the real tornado without?

How the sea must dash and roar against the rock-bound coast of Achradina, and howl in those sea-caves, among the bones!

What banks of tossing and seething waves

are rushing in at the mouth of the Great Harbour, between Maniace's Castle and Cape Plemmyrium!

How Anapus must swell and foam under the white bridge of San Guiseppe, and papyrus and arundo dorax bend under the blast!

And that gloomy lake at Lentini—Styx, or Dead Sea, or whatever it is called—loneliest or horridest. How its gloomy waters must froth and clamour upon its dreary banks!

How the tide must tower in, mountains high, in Agosta's Bay—by old Thapsus—and the plain about Catania ooze like a moist sponge!

Heaven send there may not be another trasborgo on the rail, and prevent my departure!

Having, for once in my life, come to Sicily, is it not intolerable to be shut up for two whole days, doing nothing? My two companions alone give me fortitude to bear it. In this respect I am blest. The excellent doctor strides about, spite of the weather, the very essence of good humour; his broad face framed into a continual smile, his cheery, English-toned voice waking echoes in the damp rooms. S. intellectual, suggestive, artistic, with his books

and his knowledge of books, his gentle, invalid ways, and his heavy sighs (as from a loaded heart), is immensely sympathetic.

After dinner, we meet in a central room, from which our various bedrooms open, as in a stage set-scene, We talk and we speak of what we have seen, thought, and read, display our respective "notes," and discourse history.

Not that we discourse history all day; Heaven forefend! As intermezzos there is the old joke of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, well aired since our day in Epipolœ; of this Physic is never tired. Then he abuses the Smart young man, or treats us to a page of his travels, which, being chiefly in savage lands, are not specially interesting. S—— reads out Shelley—(the Doctor will not hear of Tennyson)—and I——, I describe the latest encounter I have had with my maid.

Furiosa, who, highly indignant at being brought to such an hotel, is grotesque in her insolence.

Then, S——'s state of health seriously exercises the good Doctor's mind. Many is the times he takes me aside to ask me in a whisper, "What I think is the matter with

him? Is it heart? or lungs? Or neither, only *mind?* An aching heart, which no medicine can reach?"

"How I wish I knew!" This is the phrase with which all our confidences end.

Another day! And the rain has not ceased for one instant battering against the window-panes, nor the sirocco left off howling! Even a man could not go out into the street to-day unless he swam! So, to pass away the time, we agree to make notes for an historical subject, a life, which I am to put together and read aloud in the evening.

After much discussion, "The Life of Agathocles" is selected.

So I retire to my room and to my books, and am no more seen until dinner-time.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I Compose the History of Agathocles.—Arrival in Syracuse.—How He Rises to Power.—A "Double" of Dionysius.—The Carthaginians Again.—A Happy Inspiration.—Ho! for Africa.—The Burning of the Ships.—A Perfect Eden.—Will Carthage be His?—Hamilcar's Head.—Returns to Syracuse.—Africa Once More.—Both Sons must be Abandoned.—The Result of a Message to Menon.—Conclusion.

RAMATIS PERSONÆ :—The Doctor, S——, and Myself, holding a paper; several old chairs; a horse-hair sofa; a table with three legs; a lamp that splutters; an old dog that creeps in for company; the wind outside.

All of one mind about Agathocles, and all equally regretting that not a stone remains to mark the site of his Hexacontaclinus, so lofty that the gods smote it with lightning as soaring above their temples.

The so-called Casa d'Agathocle in the walled up enclosure of a grassy garden in

Achradina, between Santa Lucia and the Capuchin Convent, is nothing but a ruined Roman bath, or Nymphæum, with long, subterranean passages, paved with *opus incertum.*

This "Casa d'Agathocle" meaning, I presume, the House of Sixty Beds, is in Achradina; it is at least the legendary site; why, therefore, Dennis places the Hexacontaclinus in Ortygia, I am not prepared to explain.

The Doctor has just given it as his opinion, that Agathocles is "a wretch all round"—a sentiment carried by acclamation, during a furious gust of wind, which seems to roar for the express purpose of seconding us.

Then I commence reading the "History of Agathocles," which I have put together.

About the time that Timoleon beat the Carthaginians at the Crimissus, Agathocles, eighteen years old, and beautiful as a god, came into Syracuse with his father, Carcinus, from Sciacca (Thermæ Selinuntinæ), near Girgenti.

That father and son both worked as potters was a mere blind, to avert suspicion from themselves, as Greek strangers coming from a Carthaginian settlement. They would naturally be objects of suspicion to the oligarchy established on the death of Timoleon. That

suspicion would have been well-founded, we know, for Agathocles was for years in secret correspondence with the Carthaginian leaders, Hamilcar and Bomilcar.

At Syracuse, Carcinus opened a shop, to which the excessive beauty of Agathocles soon drew customers and patrons.

The vileness of his early life cannot be detailed.

We are not surprised to find that Agathocles' next step is to become a soldier. Henceforth he is to be chiefly occupied in fighting. His strong point is courage—unless it be his cunning. He had, moreover, those two qualifications specially adored by the Greeks—beauty and strength. No one had such god-like features; and he could have wielded the bow of Ulysses.

Twice he was banished, and twice he became so formidable as a brigand chief, that he was recalled; the second time as Strategus.

Myself. At break of day, the new Strategus summons the chiefs of the oligarchy to meet him at the Timoleonteium.

As a General, Agathocles is surrounded by his soldiers.

No sooner do these unfortunate chiefs

appear than they are cut down; the gates are closed, and Syracuse given over to plunder.

Six hundred of the oligarchy are executed with horrible barbarity; and four thousand citizens, the richest and the most powerful. The temples cease to be sanctuaries, and no man who appears in the streets is spared. Six thousand Syracusans manage to escape by the roofs and the walls.

At the end of three days, not an enemy remains.

Then Agathocles calls the people together, declares the city "purged of the enemies of liberty," and modestly requests to be allowed, like Timoleon, to retire and live as a simple citizen.

A general clamour declares this impossible.

"You have no right to abandon us, after what we have done," cry the people. "Now you must rule us!" And Agathocles, who has divested himself of the purple chlamyde and the golden circlet of Strategus, is pushed violently forward by the mob.

Physic. The hypocrite!

Myself. "I will govern alone, or not at all." This is the only reply vouchsafed by Agathocles to the friends who are urging him to

accede. Everything he asks is granted. Before he resumes the vestment of command he is in fact a king. Then he retires.

S——, in an analytical mood, leaning back on his chair, his thin white fingers raised and pointed together. "What strikes me forcibly in all this," he says, "is how wonderfully history repeats itself. Dionysius did precisely the same thing before, on pretty much the same spot, and Julius Cæsar came to do it afterwards at Rome. You remember Mark Antony:

> "'You all did see that on the Lupercal;
> I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
> Which he did thrice refuse!'"

Agathocles repeats the part of Dionysius. He has the same cunning, courage, and perseverance.

Both willed in youth to be Kings of Syracuse under the most absurdly adverse conditions, and both took the same means. Both pretended to be democrats; both loved building and magnificence; both passed their lives in fighting the Carthaginians.—Here my comparison ends. Dionysius knew where to stop.

The Doctor.—As for doubling parts, they all double Pisistratus. You have to live a long

while before you can compass what is in the heart of a Sicilian. They are a mixed race. Now, how can you pronounce upon the eccentricities of mixed races?

Myself.—In two years Agathocles was master of Sicily, all except the western coast at Lilybæum and Panormus, when an African fleet under Hamilcar appeared in the offing.

What led to this disruption between old friends is not clear. Possibly Agathocles had become too powerful, or as king he had no longer need of Punic support.

In the struggle that ensued, Agathocles fought like a lion; but in vain. He was defeated at Himera with the loss of seventy thousand men, deserted by his allies, and nothing left him but the strong walls of Ortygia.

Then came to him that wonderful inspiration of carrying the war into Africa, a *coup de main* worthy of Alexander the Great.

His measures are quickly and secretly taken. He coins the consecrated vessels of the temples into money, seizes upon the jewels of the women, and keeps his fleet in readiness day and night.

One day, when the harbour mouth is for a moment clear, after handing over the govern-

ment to his brother, he hurries on board, drags after him the members of the chief families whom he had massacred as hostages, and rows out into the open sea. Surely, think the Carthaginians, Agathocles must mean battle!

Not at all! With all sails set he steers straight ahead for Africa, nor can the astonished Carthaginians catch him up till he is almost on their own shores.

A fight ensues, half in and half out of the water; but the Syracusans, alive to their desperate condition if they fail, beat off the Africans with loss.

And now came a bold stroke on the part of Agathocles,—a stroke worthy of his audacity.

He declared to his good Syracusans, in a set speech, "that before leaving Syracuse he had vowed to the venerable Demeter and to Kore, to dedicate to them the wood of his ships, in the event of his victory.

"What might not a brave army do," he demanded, warming up as he went on. "Did not victory and conquest lie before them?

"Let every Hierarchus take a burning torch in hand, stand on his own deck, and

fire his own ship. I myself will bear the torch to fire the royal galley," concludes Agathocles.

And so it was!

The Doctor.—Now, as a traveller in Africa, may I be permitted a few observations? The shore upon which Agathocles landed is all barren enough now, and, God knows, has been for ages, but at that time it was a perfect Eden, crossed and recrossed by canals, and little streams paved with white stones and bordered by grass margins, in the Moorish fashion; water is so precious, every drop is preserved.

The Africans were great cultivators; their farms fenced with cactus, and hedges of twisted reeds and rushes, the oxen's horns artificially bent and gilt, and the sheep covered with skins to preserve the wool. There were date palms, aromatic trees, and thickets of plane and sycamore. No lack of traffic on the main roads; bronze chariots drawn by mules, dromedaries loaded with wine, skins, and oil barrels, and droves of slaves lashed together. The temples dotted about had the same heavy pillars you see on the Nile, the towns and villages, flat roofs and white walls, country-houses on the low hills (the African, like the Roman, had his *rus in urbe,* agreeable and

elegant), bands of oily blacks working in the fields, and a continual going and coming of horses and horsemen; everything in fact, as rich and varied as ever Baiæ was or Tusculum.

Myself (exchanging glances with S——, at this long speech).

When after their first exultation at witnessing the burning of the Sicilian fleet, the Carthaginians saw Agathocles march quickly along the shore, in the direction of Tunis and Carthage, they clothed themselves in black, and sprinkled ashes on their heads, in sign of mourning.

Agathocles had no troops to attempt the siege of Carthage, but he besieged and took Tunis. With prodigious activity he rushed from place to place. Now he was on the seashore, then within the lake at Tunis, threatening Carthage, on the borders of the desert, or back again on the sea. Again he fought Libyans and Carthaginians, and again he beat them.

One ruse I must mention. On first going into action against Hanno and Bomilcar, he caused a number of owls which he had procured to be uncaged; these, settling on the helmets and bucklers of the soldiers, were hailed as a visible symbol of the presence of Pallas.

Had Agathocles now pressed his advantage he might certainly have taken Carthage. The whole country round that great sea-lake on which the city stood, was his, and the Africans undecided if to worship him as a god or invoke him as a demon.

The Doctor. How about Syracuse and Hamilcar? Was not Hamilcar's head sent to Agathocles, like John the Baptist's to Herod?

Myself. Yes. The Syracusans, informed of Agathocles' success by a swift galley, would hear of no surrender, and Hamilcar being taken prisoner in an attack on Epipolœ, his head was cut off and carried to Africa.

When the siege of Syracuse had lasted four years Agathocles returned as suddenly as he had gone, leaving his two sons to take his place in Africa.

This brings me to another side of his character. As a father, he was unnatural.

A cry of distress soon reached him from Africa. The young Archagathus, without his father's *prestige*, is defeated. Agathocles decides to return.

By one of his clever *ruses* he eludes the Carthaginian fleet,—that hydra-headed nation having once more raised an armament against

Syracuse; yet still he lingers. At length he departs.

Archagathus had utterly failed. Agathocles finds his soldiers in Africa, starving and in rags. They are so degraded they no longer obey him.

"You have called me," he says to them, in a curt harangue, "I am here; I will lead you to victory."

He is beaten. Then all he thinks of is—How to escape!

There are the same ships which brought him from Syracuse, but no transports for the army.

That does not weigh with Agathocles; he arranges to escape with his favourite son Heraclides, to leave Archagathus and his army to its fate. But his plan is discovered.

Then he abandons *both* sons and the entire army, and sails back alone to Syracuse.

From this day, Agathocles becomes an embittered and sour-hearted man. On his way home he falls upon beautiful Segesta, destroys the town, and puts the inhabitants to the sword. Syracuse becomes a shamble. There are no bounds to his lust of blood.

Such senseless cruelty rouses even the slavish spirit of the Syracusans.

The better to overcome them, and to secure his power, he stultifies his own actions, by signing a solemn peace with Carthage, which he ratifies by an oath.

What are oaths to him? He is busy preparing a fresh armament, with which to sail for Africa, when a little accident occurs he did not reckon on.

About the Court is a young man called Menon—a very handsome Greek, and the favourite of the King. Menon hates him, and is devoted to the younger Archagathus, who, in his turn, hates the grandsire, who abandoned his father and his uncle in Africa.

Agathocles, a middle-aged man, now reigning for twenty-eight years, is living altogether too long to please his grandson. Archagathus, knowing Menon's mind, sends him a message.

Menon replies, "He will take time to consider."

Agathocles is in the habit of using a toothpick after eating. He asks Menon to fetch him one.

Menon obeys. The point is poisoned.

The King, whose teeth are bad, uses it longer than usual, while talking to his guests. The poison has time to penetrate into the

blood. His body is racked with mysterious pains. Spite of sacrifices to Æsculapius and the skill of the Greek physicians of that day, the pains increase. His mouth is full of ulcers.

Yet, marvellous to the last in constancy and courage, he calls together an assembly of the people, accuses Archagathus of poisoning him, and implores them to avenge him.

"If Syracuse will do this for me," he cries, "I, the King, will declare the state a democracy."

But a democracy would not suit Archagathus and his party at all.

While Agathocles still lives, they place him, too weak to resist,—on a funeral pyre, burn him, and silence him.

Physic puts down his cigar, and draws out a book from among some others placed on a table beside him.

"This is Polybius. I have been looking at him. This is what he says of Agathocles: 'A great man, endowed with extraordinary talents.' To leave the wheel, the kiln, and the clay, come to Syracuse at eighteen years of age, follow his designs with such success as in a short time to become master of Sicily, render himself formidable to Carthage; and, lastly, grow old in the sovereignty he has gained, and

die with the title of King, are signal proofs of vast ability and power of administration."

Thanks are then tendered to me for my little composition, and apologies made for interruptions. I apologise in turn for the imperfections of my hasty sketch. I remind them that we proposed an historical discussion, and that that means material to discuss.

No sensational event marks the close of my narrative. S —— does not cough, nor does the Doctor harangue; the stray dog that has taken refuge under the sofa is turned out, and our supper brought in by the imbecile waiter.

Then we bid each other good-night, and separate through the doors on the set-scene.

The next day, though rainy, permits of locomotion. The Doctor and I take the afternoon train back to Catania.

S——, who has been ordered to Syracuse for his health, remains behind, much to the Doctor's sorrow. I am not sure that he did not shed tears at parting.

We have all planned to meet at Palermo.

THE END.

SIMMONS & BOTTEN, Printers, Shoe Lane, E.C.

S. & H.

00083609

V
(HTP)

~~W C 89~~ Vol 2
the Diary of an Idle
Woman in Sicily
914.58 ELL/Dia
B1330 31/7/57 m/10/17

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 08 January, 2019